















# HOW TO ENJOY PICTURES







KING CHARLES I. AND HIS FAMILY

*After the painting by A. van Dyck, now in the possession of His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K. G.*



# HOW TO ENJOY PICTURES.

BY

MRS. HENRY HEAD

*Proctor*

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	Massaccio	1401-1428	
Milan- ese	Lippo Lippi	1406-1469	Umbria
	Botticelli	1447-1510	
	Da Vinci	1452-1519	
Floren- tine	Michelangelo	1474-1563	Umbria

# AL CHART OF THE PAINTERS MENTIONED IN “

ITALIAN.					FLEMISH, GERMAN, AND D			
			Venetian	Pisanello	1397-1455	Flemish	Van Eyck	c. 1 I
iero d.								
ancesca	1416-1492	Paduan	Mantegna	1431-1506			Memling	1431
rugino	1446-1523	Venetian	Bellini	1428-1516			Mabuse	1471
			Crivelli	1430-1493	German	Dürer		1471
			Carpaccio	1450-1522				
			Giorgione	1477-1511			Cranach	1472
			Titian	1477-1576			Holbein	1497
			Lotto	1476-1553	Dutch	A. Mor		1511
aphael	1483-1520		Moroni	1525-1578	Flemish	Breughel	d.	
			Veronese	1528-1588			Rubens	1577
							Van Dyck	1591
					Dutch	Frans Hals		1581
						Rembrandt		1601
						Cuyp		1621
						Paul Potter		1625
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						Hooch		1627
						Hobbema		1638
			Tiepolo	1696-1770				
			Canaletto	1697-1768				
			Longhi	1702-1785?				
			Guardi	1712-1793				

# A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE PAINTERS MENTIONED IN "A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PICTURES."

ITALIAN.									FLEMISH, GERMAN, AND DUTCH.			FRENCH.		SPANISH.		ENGLISH.	
Floren- tine	Cimabue	1240-1300															
	Giotto	1276-1336															
	Fra Angelico	1387-1455															
	Paolo Uccello	1397-1475				Venetian	Pisanello	1397-1455									
	Massaccio	1401-1428							Flemish	Van Eyck	c. 1390-1440						
	Lippo Lippi	1406-1469	Umbrian														
				Piero d.													
				Francesca	1416-1492	Padua	Mantegna	1431-1506		Memling	1430-1490						
	Botticelli	1447-1510		Perugino	1446-1523	Venetian	Bellini	1428-1516		Mabuse	1470-1541						
							Crivelli	1430-1493	German	Dürer	1471-1528						
	Da Vinci	1452-1519					Carpaccio	1450-1522									
Milan- ese							Giorgione	1477-1511		Cranach	1472-1553						
Floren- tine	Michelangelo	1474-1563					Titian	1477-1576		Holbein	1497-1543						
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				Raphael	1483-1520		Moroni	1525-1578	Flemish	Breughel	d. 1625						
							Veronese	1528-1588		Rubeas	1577-1640	Poussin	1594-1665	El Greco	1545-1614	Hans Eworts	1543-1574
										Van Dyck	1599-1641	Claude	1600-1682			Isaac Oliver	1556-1617
									Dutch	Frans Hals	1580-1666			Velasquez	1599-1660		
										Rmbrandt	1606-1669					Dohson	1610-1646
										Cuyp	1620-1691			Murillo	1617-1682	Lely	1618-1680
										Paul Potter	1625-1654						
										Jan Steen	1626-1679						
										Hooch	1629-1677						
										Hobbema	1638-1709						
							Tiepolo	1696-1770				Watteau	1684-1721			Hogarth	1697-1764
							Canaletto	1697-1768				Laocret	1690-1743			Wilson	1714-1782
							Longhi	1702-1785?				Chardin	1699-1779			Reynolds	1723-1792
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# HOW TO ENJOY PICTURES

## INTRODUCTION

“The aim of education is to bring the highest gifts of the imagination to bear upon life.”

FAIRY godmothers came to the cradle of the little Princess in our story-books, bringing fairy gifts for future blessing, as we all know well. But our cradles were no less fortunate, for to each one of us, born into this happy world, were given five priceless gifts, quite fairy-like if we come to think of them—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting.

This book concerns the first of these gifts only, and it is, after tasting, the first of which we appear to be conscious. Before even the eyes of the baby-child can focus, you see it stretch out its hands to sun-rays, to any bright dancing objects, to fire- or candle-light, or reflected gleams on polished brass or copper. Later you will yourselves remember how the sight of pleasant things is mixed up with

## INTRODUCTION

all your early joys—the checkered patches of sunlight and shadow over the road as you walked, the green tree-tops tossed against the blue sky, the white clouds massed above the chimney-tops or turning golden at sunset time. Indoors you remember the square of sunshine shifting its position on the walls of staircase or nursery, or lying aslant the floor; the fire-light leaping on the well-known furniture and changing the look of it. All this time you will have been making pictures without knowing it, pictures which you will carry about with you probably all your lives. Besides this, you will have had picture-books: first of all pictures of dogs and horses, motor-cars and furniture-vans, and you will have learnt to recognize them and compare them with the real animals and carriages of different kinds which you saw on your walks or from your windows. Later will have come illustrated books, Bible-stories or fairy-stories, where the pictures put before you tell how the people of whom you read looked, and in what kind of a world they moved. Lastly you will come to pictures, real pictures by great artists of the mighty past, and these pictures are our great inheritance because they belong truly to all those of us who see them with understanding eyes and a mind open to learn the secret of their beauty.

To love pictures well is to feel at home in every country of Europe, and in many cities of America

## INTRODUCTION

too. When you go abroad and are feeling perhaps strange and a little homesick in quite new surroundings, you have only to seek out a picture-gallery, and in a moment you are surrounded by august friends and glorious associations. This happens over and over again. You mount the great stairs, you push open the heavy doors, and, standing on the wide, empty, shining floors, you find yourself no longer a stranger amongst strangers, but a child of the house among kindred that he loves—honoured kindred to whose shrines he has made a lengthy pilgrimage. But such happiness is reached only along the paths of knowledge, and the steps you take towards it must at first be little patient ones.

Let me tell you, to begin with, what, so far as we know, are the first pictures ever made in our Continent. To do this we must go back to the days when the Greeks were masters of the world. With them, love of beauty went side by side with success in conquest, and when you go to Athens you will see still standing the temples built by them in those far-off days of triumph when victories were celebrated, of which we read in ancient books. Such victories the Greeks carved in marble, and these carven pictures we may still see and marvel at. They had also, as we learn, pictures and picture-galleries close to their temples and sacred enclosures, but these have all been lost, pictures being,



## INTRODUCTION

as you will easily understand, far more perishable than statues.

When Greece was conquered in its turn, the victorious Romans carried off many beautiful things with them, and filled their villas with bronze figures, and cups and vases of painted earthenware ; introducing thus into Italy a love of design and colour and symmetry which has influenced, through succeeding centuries, the whole of Europe.

All this happened before the Christian era, and with the coming of Christianity to Rome a very curious change took place. The Romans in their pagan days had adorned their houses and temples, their baths and palaces, with wall-paintings, sometimes painted on to the wall itself, more often composed of small fragments of coloured stone or glass, put together to form a picture, and called a "mosaic." These pictures for the most part represented stories from their mythology, Jupiter with his eagle and thunderbolt, Mercury and his two serpents, Orpheus and his lyre ; or illustrations of whole fables, such as the beautiful story of Cupid and Psyche.

But as the Romans became christianized, they no longer wished to see their walls decorated with pictures of the gods in whom they had ceased to believe. The beginnings of this new art were hidden far underground in the Catacombs at Rome, where in the early days of persecution the



## INTRODUCTION

Christians used secretly to worship. There we can still see painted on the wall frescoes or pictures of sacred subjects—Christ the Good Shepherd carrying the weakling lamb, or, a shepherd's pipe in His hand, surrounded by His flocking sheep. In this attitude Christ reminds us of the Orpheus of earlier designs, and indeed the artists had learned to adapt the old subjects of their art to the requirements of the new religion that was surely conquering the world. They painted, too, subjects from the Old Testament, but always such as would illustrate the New—Noah in his Ark, to signify the Church of Christ; Moses striking the Rock, because Christ's side was pierced on the cross; Jonah and his whale, foreshadowing the Resurrection; Elijah and the fiery horses, showing forth the Ascension of Christ into Heaven.

Four centuries later the need for secrecy was over, and Christianity was enthroned, the religion of the State. Now the Catacombs were forsaken, and churches were built in honourable positions, and decorated with gorgeous mosaics. These mosaics may still be seen in many Roman churches and in the Cathedral of Ravenna, far north of Rome. They follow the lines of architecture, filling all the spaces between the arches, for example, and the windows, where, in our churches, we are accustomed to see bare walls. On these spaces in these early churches you will see, against backgrounds of glowing gold,

## INTRODUCTION

great figures of Christ, His hand lifted in blessing, surrounded by groups of winged angels, and below, the flowing rivers of Paradise. Processions you see, too, of Saints and Martyrs, Virgins and Confessors; there, too, is the Virgin with the Holy Child. From their very nature, mosaics can only be seen in the churches for which they were made. I tell you about them that you may understand how the desire to teach the doctrines of their religion to the ignorant, and to impress the same on the few who were learned, inspired the founders of these early churches, and was the determining reason for these magnificent decorations. In those days there were no books as we now know them; printing was not invented for many years later. Every book then existing had been painstakingly inscribed word by word, and such books, or manuscripts as they were called, were of necessity very costly. They were mostly illustrated, sometimes only with illuminated capital letters, oftener by miniature pictures, very vivid in action and gay in colour. You may still see them, carefully preserved in museums and libraries, glowing with gold leaf, as fresh now as when they were first painted.

But a full stop came to the development of these peaceful arts. For four long centuries Italy was at war, and the land was filled with battle-cries and the sound of conflicting hosts. Rome itself was sacked, barbarians from the North flocked in, and

## INTRODUCTION

the worship of beauty ceased. When later churches were built, there was no one left who knew how to make the rich mosaics for their walls. Strange artists had to be sent for from far-away Byzantium, our Constantinople, and they had different ways of interpreting the old subjects; they veiled the Virgin's head, and covered her feet with the straight, stiff folds of her falling robe.

In the tenth century the great republic of Venice began to grow in power, helped by Byzantium, whose merchants needed a friendly port on the Adriatic for their ships. Thus it came about that, when the Venetians built their great Cathedral of S. Mark, they adorned it, within and without, with mosaics of this Byzantine type.

And now there began for the whole of the Latin race a rich, free, and glorious epoch. In 1204 Constantinople fell, and many of its most skilful artists and most learned men left their homes to come and settle in Italy, spreading their skill and knowledge among their conquerors. When people live in peace and begin to amass wealth, they have much time and money to spend on beautiful things, especially when their religion itself encourages them to do so. The Head of the Church at this time was the wise and gentle Pope Innocent III, who, you remember, excommunicated King John of England. This great ruler made his power felt throughout Europe, upheld the supremacy of the Church, and

## INTRODUCTION

wore himself out in his efforts to establish its glory. Under him religious art flourished, and it is from the period of his rule, in the early thirteenth century, that our account of painting in Europe really begins.

## PART I

# ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

### CHAPTER I

IN the time of the Pope Innocent III there lived the great Francis of Assisi, whose real name was John, but who was called Francis, or "The Little Frenchman," because he loved so well the songs of the French troubadours and all gay, bright, happy things. Although his own parents were well off, he gave up everything for the poor, and even begged for them, going from door to door in his coarse brown tunic, shoeless, and without so much as a staff in his hands. He founded the Order of the Franciscan Friars, which Pope Innocent III confirmed, and after his death he was honoured as a saint by all good Christian people. Pilgrims came from all parts to Assisi, where his convent stood on a very steep hill. With the gifts they brought, it was planned to build two very large churches one above the other, connected by winding stairs; and it was on the walls of the Lower Church that Cimabue, the first great painter of Italy, painted his pictures.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

CIMABUE (1240-1300).

As a boy Cimabue had been sent to Santa Maria Novella in Florence to learn grammar at the convent school. But all day long he cared only to draw men and horses and houses, and in time he became an artist, great enough to be sent to Assisi, to decorate first the Lower, and then the Upper, Church of the convent with pictures of great beauty and richness. For his own Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence he painted a picture, not on the walls, but on a wooden panel, and when it was finished, and the people came to his house and saw Our Lady and the Angels standing there as if in life, they were so amazed by the beauty of the picture that they carried it to the church with a procession of great pomp and with glad sounds of trumpets, and with such heartfelt joyfulness, that the streets through which they passed were called the "Streets of Rejoicing" for long years after.

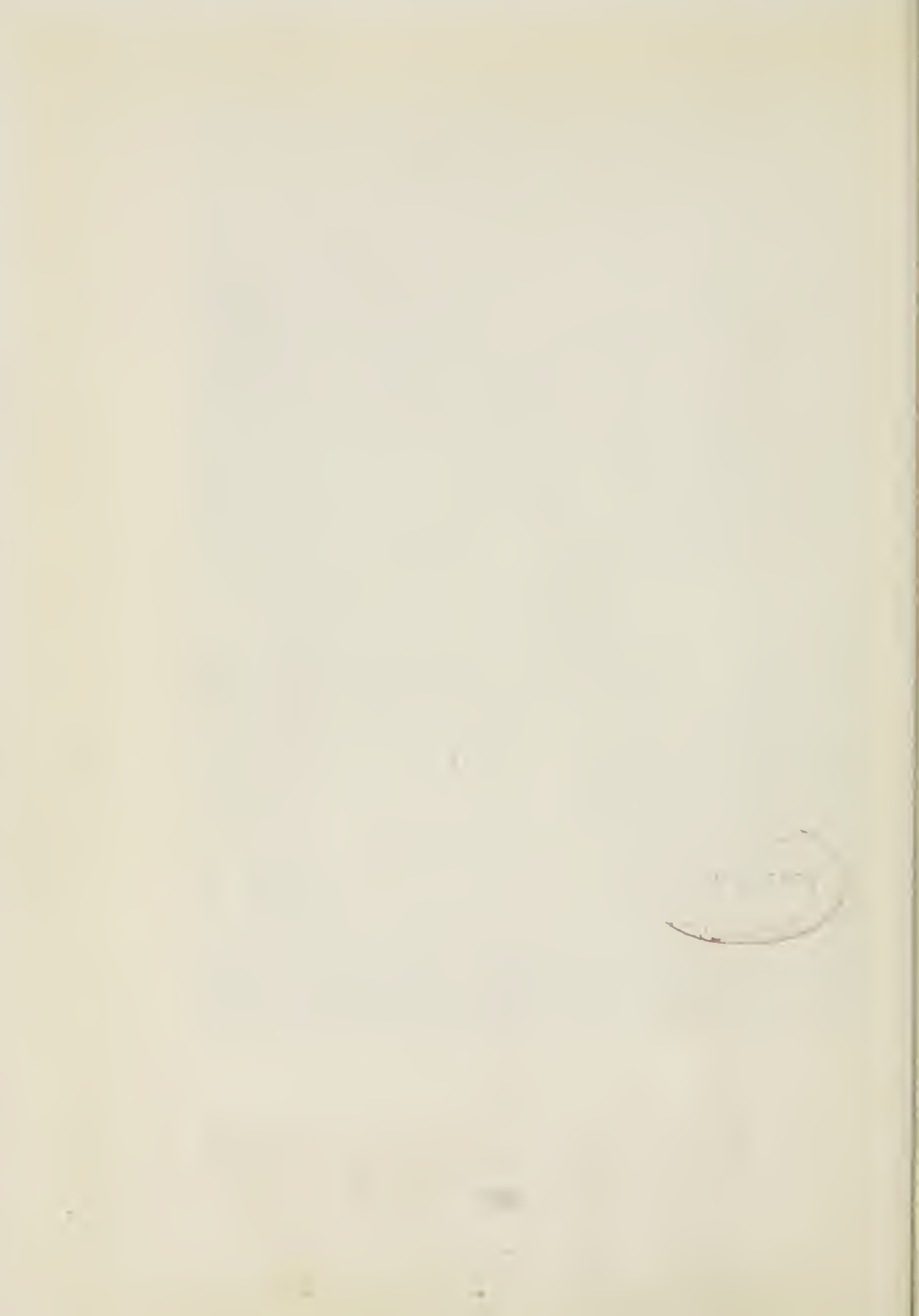
Now, this great painter, Cimabue, was in the country one day, about fourteen miles from Florence, when he found a little boy minding his father's sheep ; before him was a large, smooth rock, and on it with a small, sharp stone the child was drawing a sheep so faithfully that Cimabue knew him to be an artist, took him back to Florence with him, and taught him all he knew. This little boy was the painter Giotto.





S. FRANCIS FEEDING THE BIRDS.

*A fresco by Giotto in the Church of S. Tom. at Assisi.*





# GIOTTO

GIOTTO (1276-1336).

The work of Giotto is of the very greatest importance in the story of painting, because, before him, the pictures in the churches had given people only what they expected to see. They wanted gold backgrounds, with saints and angels arranged against them in shining groups, and such decorations had great beauty, but they had no connection with real everyday men and women, or the world they lived in. Giotto first painted life as he really saw it, and how vividly he saw it, we can still feel when we stand in admiration before his work at Assisi. For he continued to carry on the work of adorning the churches of S. Francis, and painted on the walls of the churches thirty-two stories from the life of the Saint. One of them you will see illustrated here in your book. It is the story of how S. Francis preached to the birds. You can see how every point is brought out by Giotto, so that all the worshippers in the convent church might through all ages read from the painted walls as easily as from a printed book. The tale tells how S. Francis once went on a journey, and took with him Brother Masseo of his Order, and, as they were going on their way, they saw a great company of birds. S. Francis told his companion to wait while he preached to his little sisters, the birds. You see to the left of the picture Brother Masseo in his brown habit, with bare feet

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

and a cord round his waist, his hand uplifted in wonder at the sight. Then S. Francis began to preach, and as he preached the little birds left the trees and listened humbly from the ground. You see them all—the thrushes with their spotted breasts, blackbirds, gay-coloured finches, a host of little birds, all listening reverently to the words of the sermon. When it was over they waited quietly, nor did they think of flying away till S. Francis had dismissed them with his blessing. Brother Masseo tells us later the subject of the sermon. In it the Saint impressed on his little congregation how specially they were bound, at all times and in all places, to give praise to God for their liberty, for their feathered garments, for their food, which they enjoyed without either sowing or reaping, for their safe nesting-places, and for all the good things God had so freely given to them. “Therefore,” says the Father, “beware, my little sisters, of the sin of ingratitude, and study always to give praises unto God, your Creator.” Then, the sermon being over, the birds opened their beaks, spread their wings, and by their songs showed S. Francis their exceeding great joy. The Saint marvelled at their sweet friendliness, made the sign of the Cross over them, and bade them depart. And as they rose in the air, they flew in the fashion of the Cross and divided to the four quarters of the globe, singing and praising God. And by this picture the Brothers of the

## GIOTTO

Order were taught how they, too, must depart, like the birds, possessing nothing, trusting only in God's providence, carrying the lesson of the Cross to the four quarters of the globe.

The new Pope, Boniface VIII, heard of Giotto's painting, and sent one of his courtiers to Florence to find out if he really was such a fine artist as men said. The messenger asked Giotto for a little drawing to take back with him to His Holiness, and being a man of courteous manners, Giotto dipped his pen in red paint, and with one turn of his hand made a perfect circle. This he gave to the messenger, who thought it but a poor present for a mighty Pope. But the Pope understood better, and sent for Giotto to Rome, where he made designs for mosaics in S. Peter's itself, and received much gold and many favours in return for his work. It was while on this visit to Rome in the year 1300 that Giotto made friends with the great poet Dante, whose portrait he painted later on the walls of a palace chapel in Florence. There you can still see it. The poet's face is in profile, with his great hooked nose, a hood over his head, a flower in his hand, and a book under his arm. This picture is specially interesting, because it is the first portrait that we possess of a man, painted during his own lifetime.

Giotto was an architect too, and he was building the campanile or bell-tower of the cathedral at Florence when he died, to be buried with great

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

honours in the cathedral he had helped to beautify. It was in Giotto's time that the French Pope, Clement V, went to live at Avignon in France. Giotto was asked to go there to decorate the Pope's palace at Avignon, but the artist died before he had time to make the journey.

Giotto's pictures take us, as I told you, straight to the life of his day: at Assisi we see the little street-boys mocking the woman who, symbolizing poverty, is wedded to S. Francis; in S. Peter's in Rome is the mosaic of Christ walking on the Sea of Galilee, while a little urchin sits quietly fishing with a line from the shore; at Naples, in a fresco celebrating a royal marriage, there is a fiddler playing and a lad fluting, while youths and maidens dance to the measure. And Giotto too, a country lad, first painted landscape in his pictures. We see the trees standing out against the blue sky in our picture with the life-like little birds, which is in itself a great advance after the stiff golden backgrounds of the earlier pictures.

It was Giotto, also, who first painted in schemes of colour that should please the eye; he saw the beauty of the world around him, and chose from it the things which in his pictures should both charm the imagination and satisfy people's love of reality. But when you compare Giotto's pictures with the work of those who came before him, you must not condemn the old mosaics with their round-eyed

## FRA ANGELICO

Madonnas and stiff attendant saints ; they have their beauty, which we are bound to recognize, though with Giotto, men's minds were reaching out to solve new problems, and a new order of things was beginning.

FRA ANGELICO (1387-1455).

Some fifty years after the death of Giotto there was born in the neighbourhood of Florence a painter who was also a saint. He did not, like Giotto, seek to bring the things of everyday life into his pictures, but he painted always as if Heaven lay open before his eyes. He did not choose to make money by his art, but he entered the Order of Preaching Brothers, and painted only for the glory of God and the good of the brotherhood. He carried on the decoration of Santa Maria Novella, which Giotto had begun ; and when the Convent of San Marco was built for his Order, he painted on its walls great frescoes with scenes taken from the Passion of our Lord, which are still to be seen there to this very day. But beyond all things he loved to paint the joys of Paradise, where multitudes of tiny figures are seen rejoicing amongst the flowery meadows. So sincere was his reverence for these sacred themes, that he painted, we are told, always upon his knees ; nor would he ever alter anything that he had once finished, because he



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

knew it was God's hand that had guided his brush. He refused all earthly honours offered to him, and so great was his obedience to the laws of his Order, that he would not dine even with the Pope until he had received permission from his Superior.

In the National Gallery in London you will see a picture by Fra Angelico, "Christ surrounded by Angels," which will give you a good idea of his work. You see there a picture of the Risen Lord, His hand uplifted in blessing, the flag of victory in the other. Below Him real Angelico Angels blow pæans of triumph from their long trumpets, clash cymbals, or even play on tiny organs. To right and left of this central subject stretch a throng of Patriarchs, Saints, and Martyrs, every little figure perfect in pure, bright colour, exquisitely finished. The figures are all heavily draped; there is no knowledge of anatomy, no desire for reality. The lesson he teaches is an eternity of peace and holy joy, where the armies of the Blessed One cease from combat, and hosts of Angels with wings of purple and flame-colour play for ever on psalteries and cymbals. Such lessons were greatly needed in those days of constant warfare, and Fra Angelico was deeply loved; he died at Rome, where he was painting for the Pope, and there he was buried in a tomb with the epitaph, "He gave all gains to the Children of Christ."

## CHAPTER II

THE fifteenth century was in Italy a period of great change and advancement ; we call it the time of the Renaissance, for, out of the darkness and struggle of the Middle Ages, knowledge and art were born anew to greater glory, and more perfect achievement than had been known since the most glorious days of Greece and Rome. Such an awakening did not come suddenly. It had its roots in the endeavours of those who in the Middle Ages were seekers after truth. Dante foreshadowed such an awakening : Giotto worked towards it. The event which more than any other helped to throw open the gates of knowledge, was the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, when the treasures of antiquity, long hoarded within its walls, were scattered over the world. This new learning, as it was called, was in reality old knowledge revived. Men threw off the bonds in which too narrow traditions and beliefs had bound them, and rejoiced in the free, large, active, human spirit of Greek and Roman art and literature.

First of all the Italian cities, Florence embraced the new learning. Florence was a republic, but since the early part of the thirteenth century, her

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

fortunes had depended largely on one great family, the Medici. The reigning Medici at this time, most powerful and richest of his race, was Cosimo, whose name we must remember as one of the greatest patrons of art the world has ever known. He was himself a financier, a musician, learned in theology and philosophy, a staunch lover of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

### PISANELLO (1397-1455).

A few years before Cosimo di Medici, an artist was born near the Lake of Garda, Pisanello by name. He was a sculptor too, and is best known by his beautiful medals. In those days great men and members of their family had medals with their portraits struck to commemorate events in their families. These are often very perfect works of art, and it is from them that we know the faces of the famous men of the time. Pisanello's work in marble and bronze had much influence on his painting, as we see when he drew knights in armour, for the armour in those days was richly engraved and ornamented, in a manner reproduced by his skill with great accuracy. If you look at the illustration by him of the two Saints, S. Anthony and S. George, you will see how finely the face of the latter is modelled, as though it had been cut for a medal. His shining armour, too, is beautifully





S. ANTHONY AND S. GEORGE.

*After the painting by Vittore Pisano, called Pisanello, now in the  
National Gallery, London.*



## PISANELLO

drawn, and his golden sword and spurs are richly chased—all details loved by a sculptor. These two Saints, facing each other against a background of dark fir-trees, represent the two sides of the Christian's life: S. Anthony stands for prayer and meditation, S. George for fighting and action. In S. Anthony's hand you notice the golden bell to frighten away the evil spirits, and his pig has become a legendary animal because, we are told, his followers kept pigs with which to feed their Order, and their pigs were allowed to stray all over the country, while other people's pigs were locked up if they were found out of their own homes. The brave knight, S. George, is, as you know, the Patron Saint of England. He comes from the East, where he was first honoured, but the Crusaders adopted him as being a real soldier-saint, and he became so popular in England that, when our Edward III. built a chapel for his castle at Windsor, he dedicated it to S. George, and "Saint George for Merry England" became the battle-cry of the English men-at-arms.

Pisanello was famous, too, for the lively, natural way in which he painted animals—stags and horses, dogs and birds, too, as Giotto had done. In his workshop he had a pupil, whose name we highly honour, Paolo Uccello.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

PAOLO UCCELLO (1397-1475).

Paolo Uccello was the first painter to learn the laws of perspective—that is, he showed how objects could be drawn as they really look, round, solid, or at a distance, although the surface upon which they had to be drawn is in every case absolutely flat. Such a thing had never been thought of before, and his friends considered such study waste of time in a man who could paint figures and animals so cleverly that he was called the greatest painter since the days of Giotto. But Paolo Uccello went his own way. He did not care very much for colour even, and would paint blue fields and red cities, which worried his critics sadly. His wife, too, would rather he had sold his pictures and become rich and famous in his lifetime, instead of sitting up all night working to gain more knowledge for those who came after him; but when she scolded him he would say, “What a delightful thing is this perspective!” and go on just as before.

Paolo Uccello means “Paul of the Birds,” because, though he painted all animals well, he liked best to paint all manner of birds, as his master Pisanello had done before him. He painted frescoes, too, in the cloisters of Santa Maria Novella, and, for the sake of the animals, he chose to paint the day of the creation of the animals in the



*Anderson.*

DETAIL FROM THE VIRGIN AND CHILD.  
(By Filippo Lippi in the Pitti Gallery, Florence.)





## PAOLO UCCELLO

Garden of Eden. Like Giotto, too, he loved to paint landscape, and we have a large picture by him in the National Gallery, where you may see a good example of this. It is the picture of the Battle of San Romano, where, in the background, you see the country-side, with climbing hills, and fields with hedges and trees, all separated from the foreground by trellises of flowering roses and orange-trees. In the foreground the fight is marvellously well represented; you seem to hear the clash of the opposing armies, and see the tossing of their banners, while he has placed the massive horses of the warriors in various difficult positions, so as to show how well he had mastered the new-found laws of perspective.

In the Cathedral of Florence Uccello made an interesting monument in memory of a famous Englishman who died about that time. This was Sir John Hawkwood, a gentleman from Essex, who had gained great renown as the leader of a band of mercenaries—soldiers who fought for gold, and were hired by the Princes of those times to fight their battles for them. This Hawkwood was a far-away ancestor of our poet Shelley.

When we consider the work of Paolo Uccello we find ourselves thinking more of his theories about painting than about the actual pictures he painted; but we do right to honour such men highly, for they build houses in the clouds which

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

other men inherit, and live only for the advancement of knowledge, without any thought of selfish gain.

MASSACCIO (1401-1428).

Another man, born just as the fifteenth century was beginning, also held the torch of learning high, to light the path of those who followed him. This was the artist Massaccio. He was a man of great originality, who in the twenty-seven short years of his life accomplished a great deal, and, not content with copying cleverly those who had gone before him, tried to see things for himself, and by his genius was able to put what he saw freshly and convincingly before us. His real name was Tommaso, but because he cared only for work and not at all for money nor collecting his debts, his friends called him Massaccio, or "Careless Thomas," and that is the name by which he is always remembered.

We know Massaccio best by his frescoes in the Carmine Chapel in Florence, and by studying them we discover that he looked at the subjects of his pictures very differently from the earlier painters. When they wished to paint Bible-stories, they thought first how best to make the story clear and interesting to the people who came to worship in the churches; Massaccio cared most to draw beautifully the human form and to place the figures



## MASSACCIO

in his pictures so as to show their beauty of line to best advantage. There is a fresco of Adam and Eve in the Carmine which shows this very well. Our first parents are being expelled from the gardens of Paradise by the Angel with the flaming sword. Their figures, clad only in vine-leaves, are drawn with wonderful truth and beauty. Adam is covering his face with his hands in shame and misery; Eve lifts hers despairingly upwards, and her lips are parted as if she were crying aloud. They are as alive to us as Milton's Adam and Eve in "Paradise Lost"; and when we think of the Garden of Eden, it is in Milton's words and by the light of Massaccio's picture that we imagine our first parents.

Many years after Massaccio's death, Leonardo da Vinci, an artist of whom you will hear much later, wrote that the art of painting declined after Giotto's death until the days of Massaccio, because people were content to copy the ideas of Giotto, and lacked invention, till Massaccio "showed them by his perfect works how those who take for their standard anyone but Nature weary themselves in vain."

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI (1406-1469).

We do not know for certain if Massaccio, this perfect master, had any pupils during his lifetime. Fra Filippo may have learnt from him; at any rate,

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

he knew and loved his work, and when he was still young and at school he used to spend his playhours looking at the frescoes in the Carmine Chapel. He had been early left an orphan, and the aunt who had charge of him sent him to the Carmelites, where he became a friar. But he only cared for painting, and became so discontented that he ran away from the convent and led, as we are told, an adventurous life for many years, being even carried away prisoner in a Moorish ship, as some say. However that may be, he returned at last to Florence, and was made chaplain to a convent of nuns at Prato, close by. Here he painted a picture of the Virgin for the high altar of his chapel, and took for his model a beautiful novice named Lucrezia, with whom he fell in love. One day, when she was going on a pilgrimage to a neighbouring shrine, he persuaded her to run away with him. This, of course, was an unpardonable sin, but the mighty Cosimo di Medici, of whom I have told you, on account of Filippo's great talents, gained a pardon for him from the Pope; but Lucrezia's own people never forgave Fra Filippo, and when he died suddenly, the Florentines believed these relations had caused him to be poisoned.

Like Massaccio, Fra Filippo painted many frescoes, but he also painted pictures on panels, one of which is now in the Academy at Florence, the famous "Coronation of the Virgin." This charming

## FRA FILIPPO LIPPI

picture is full of lovely colour, crowded with graceful figures of blessed spirits and angels bearing tall spikes of blossoming lilies, and yet, though it shows you a heavenly scene, it does not make you think of Heaven; it reminds you rather of happy earthly scenes, full of light, and joy, and tenderness. You will notice that Fra Filippo draws all his people with the same broad foreheads, short faces, and wide jaws. The sweet-faced Virgin in your illustration has the same type of face. Some people say he drew always the face of his wife, for whom he had sinned and suffered so much. His angels have the same look, too; they are not heavenly visitants, but charming boyish creatures, with laughing, human faces. If you go to the National Gallery, you will see all these things for yourselves in his "Annunciation" there. The girlish Virgin sits under her beautiful loggia, her little face with its broad brows bending meekly to the Angel, who kneels on the flowery grass of the garden-close. He has a real boy's face, suddenly grown grave with the mighty message; in his left arm he bears the same tall spike of blossoming lilies. More lilies grow in the sculptured pot between them. Behind the Virgin is her pretty carved bed; through an open door you can see the wooden stairs leading to an upper story—nothing is wanting to give a feeling of happy intimacy.

# ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

BOTTICELLI (1447-1510).

That loftiness of imagination, which is the gift only of the greatest artists, and which is absent, perhaps, from the work of Fra Filippo, we find in his pupil, Botticelli. Sandro Botticelli was not named after his father, but after his first teacher, a goldsmith. In that golden age all the arts were equal and all the craftsmen artists, and in his painting we see how much young Sandro learnt from his practice of the goldsmith's art. He learnt how to use gold to heighten the effect of light in his women's hair and draperies, and he applies it to his floating scarves and other delicate fabrics with special grace and delicacy. Under Fra Filippo he learnt with extraordinary rapidity, and his fame became known even outside Florence. The Pope sent for him to go to Rome, to become master of the works in his new Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. In this way he earned much money, but spent more, and returning to Florence, he fell under the influence of the great preaching monk Savonarola, of whom you will read in George Eliot's "Romola." Savonarola was a great enemy to the Renaissance; he found that the new learning and the love of art drew men's hearts away from God, and he persuaded his disciples by his eloquence to bring their treasures of art and learning to be burnt in great bonfires which he had kindled in the square

## BOTTICELLI

before the cathedral at Florence. In obedience to his teaching Botticelli left his work, and grew so poor that he had to live on the charity of Lorenzo di Medici, the son of the famous Cosimo, who, like his father, was a munificent patron of all artists. Thus living in obscurity, Botticelli died at last, peacefully, in his own city.

Botticelli's pictures have a distinctive grace, which charms the eye from the first glance ; you will not need to be told to care for them, you will care without in the beginning knowing your reasons. Later you will appreciate his clear, pale colouring and the way his pictures are designed, making patterns that fill delightfully the allotted space ; examined more closely, you will find in them a wealth of beautiful detail that draws you on to study them with still more delighted interest. When some day you are shown Chinese and Japanese pictures you will admire in them the same clearness of colouring, and notice how their figures, too, form a kind of beautiful pattern against a flat background.

Botticelli was a child of the Renaissance ; he loved passionately the old myths of Greece and Rome, and painted Venus with her crown of roses as often as the Madonna with her golden halo. He is the chief of all great poet-painters, and the stories he paints for us become real to us in the splendour of his imagination. Two of his most famous pictures



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

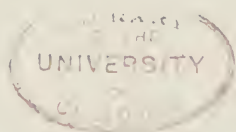
are in Florence, the "Birth of Venus" and the "Masque of Spring." In the first, Venus stands in her shell, floating forward on a rippled sea; on each wavelet is a flat pale rose. Botticelli's roses seem to belong to him as tall Virgin-lilies to Fra Filippo. The paint is thin and pure in colour. The face of Venus is wistful, her hair of pale gold floats in the light breeze. We know it must have been in just such a light and from just such a sea that the Mother of Love would be born. In the second picture, the design is fuller and more complicated. The masque is full of figures, circling round the central point of the whole picture—a Florentine lady, Smeralda Bandinelli, in her flowery dress, the lady of the festival. In her honour myriad flowers are springing, winds in the form of stalwart youths are blowing soft breezes, the months, as maidens, are dancing hand in hand, and all is fun and jollity, a world of loveliness set against a background of dark trees. In the National Gallery is one of Botticelli's mythological pictures, Mars and Venus resting, while young satyrs, horned and hoofed, play with the war-god's cast-off helmet. Venus has a great look of Smeralda herself; she leans quietly on a soft rose-coloured cushion. An impish satyr blows through a conch-shell into the sleeper's ear, but does not waken the god. Behind them is an olive-grove, and in the distance hills softly outlined.

There is also an example in the National Gallery



THE VIRGIN AND CHILD

*After the painting by Botticelli and in the Museum, Public Domain at Vienna.*





## BOTTICELLI

of a Nativity by Botticelli, painted, as an inscription in Greek tells us, after Savonarola's death, when as you know he had renounced painting secular pictures. Under a thatched penthouse is the Virgin, kneeling. The Holy Child lies propped up against a saddle, and points with His small finger to His mouth, symbolizing thus that He is the Word of God. In the foreground, on the roof, up in the air, Angels sing or kneel or float joyously, all expressing in an ecstasy of delight their marvel at the good tidings they are bringing to mankind. Most lovely of all is the group of Angels floating in the sky ; they sway with a kind of passionate violence and joy in movement of which Botticelli has the secret, and as they float, they sing, and the air seems alive with their song.

Our illustration is from one of Botticelli's rapt Virgins with her Child, showing the depth of his religious feelings. You must notice the delicate work lavished on the two haloes, reminding us of his goldsmith's days, and the fine pleats of the Madonna's veil, with all the charming, interesting detail in the binding of the books on the table, the bowl and heaped-up fruit. On the Mother's face is a look of sorrowful tenderness, while the Babe holds in His left hand the three nails and the little crown of thorns, symbols of His Passion.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA (1416-1492).

Piero della Francesca is connected, not with Fra Filippo, nor with Botticelli, but with Paolo Uccello, the first master of perspective. Piero was called Francesca after his mother, who brought him up herself, and taught him all she knew. He was a painter of frescoes and decorated chapels and palaces, particularly those for the Chapel of the Malatestas at Rimini. But we remember him best by his portraits. Hitherto, portraits had been painted only as incidents in pictures: sometimes the donor and his wife, or the donor and his patron saint, stood or knelt on each side of an altar-piece; or portraits were introduced among the spectators in some sacred scene. Piero painted pictures of living people, and in your illustration you see the portrait of Frederigo di Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, one of his patrons, and the grandfather of Michelangelo's friend, Vittoria Colonna. You must notice the fine modelling of his face and the beautiful perspective of the background with the white-sailed fishing-boats on the wide river, and the faint blue mountains outlined in the far distance.

In the National Gallery are two portraits of women, one of which is certainly by Piero. This is the picture of Isotta da Rimini, a lady celebrated for her intellect and beauty. To us, perhaps, her beauty is less apparent, and the very high forehead



FEDERIGO DI MONTEFELTRO, DUKE OF URBINO.

*(After the painting by Piero della Francesca, now in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.)*



## PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

looks disagreeably bare and bald. But that was a much-esteemed charm in Piero's time, and if a woman's hair grew low on her forehead, it was shaved away to give her the fashionable high brow.

You may see, too, in the National Gallery a lovely Nativity by Piero, unfinished and rather brown in colour, but original and full of interest ; in design reminding us of the Botticelli Nativity with the penthouse for stable, and a choir of singing Angels, opening wide their sweet, round mouths, and holding instruments of music in their hands.

In his old age, that saddest of all fates for an artist befell Piero ; he grew blind, and died at a good old age in the little town of Borgo San Sepolcro, where he was born.

## CHAPTER III

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519).

FROM his youth, Leonardo was beautiful to look upon, and the chroniclers of his time describe him so vividly that we seem to see him standing before us: "He was of a fine person, well-proportioned, full of grace, and of a beautiful aspect. He wore a rose-coloured tunic, short to the knee, although long garments were then in use. He had, reaching down to the middle of his breast, a fine beard, curled and well kept." His beauty was equalled by his intellect, which enabled him to do well whatever he put his hand to do. He was born in the little castellated town of Vinci on the slopes of Mount Albano, twenty miles from Florence. His master was Verrocchio, an artist who had won this name, "The True-Eyed One," by his surprising mastery of many arts. Those who knew him said he was famous as a goldsmith, a master of perspective, a sculptor, inlayer of woods, painter, and musician. Leonardo probably began his life as an apprentice when he was only twelve years old, and about that time he would have seen many fine works that Verrocchio was designing—the great ball of gilded copper for the dome of the cathedral, the magnificent Medici

## LEONARDO DA VINCI

tomb in the Church of San Lorenzo, and the bronze statue of David, all of which are still to be seen in Florence to this day.

As time went on, Leonardo surpassed his master, and showed himself almost as a wonder-working magician ; he was at the same time painter, poet, sculptor, architect, engineer, mathematician, and philosopher. He studied botany and anatomy ; he loved music and played his own songs on the lute, or on instruments which he himself invented. He made models of mills and presses, levers and cranes, pumps for drawing water, diving- and flying-machines. He drew thousands of designs for such things, and kept them in little leather-bound notebooks, which he stuck in his belt. I have held one of these precious notebooks in my hand, and as I turned the pages, the ceaseless work of his active brain lay there, preserved after all these centuries in his tiny, clear drawings, all carefully finished and accurate, ready to be used. Other books he kept, in which he noted everything that had struck him as he walked through the busy streets—the twist of a woman's hair as it curled round her head, the huge, misshapen nose of some ugly fellow who had passed him in his walk, or the grotesque, toothless chin of some aged hag.

His fame grew rapidly, and when Ludovico Sforza became Duke of Milan, he sent to Florence for Leonardo, who alone of all the artists of the day



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

could bring honour to the court of the new Duke, by designing scenery and planning masques for the great court festivals. It was here in Milan that he painted his famous "Last Supper" for the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie. This wall-painting still exists, but so defaced by time that we imagine more than we see of its vanished beauty. But if you are in London and go to the Diploma Gallery in Burlington House, you can see a very early copy of it by an artist named Marco da Oggionno, which gives you a good idea of its majestic beauty, and makes you understand how highly men praised it in Leonardo's own day, and how even the King of France sent to Milan to see if it could not be transferred from the refectory walls to his own palace.

Leonardo's stay in Milan was brought to an end by the fall of his patron, the Duke, but, full of courage, he set out for Venice, visiting the court of Mantua by the way. There he was asked to paint the portrait of the beautiful Isabella d'Este, and he did make a drawing of her which was said to be marvellously like ; this drawing is still at the Louvre, but, as far as we know, the portrait was never painted. From Venice Leonardo returned to Florence, and we possess in the Diploma Gallery the splendid cartoon which he then drew for a picture : the Virgin with S. Anne and the Holy Child. It is one of the most perfect drawings in the world. The



## LEONARDO DA VINCI

Virgin sits on the knees of her mother, half-listening to her, half-looking with absorbed, smiling lips at her Child, who lifts His baby fingers in blessing, while the little S. John regards Him wonderingly.

About this time a new patron sought Leonardo out, Cæsar Borgia, one of the most extraordinary figures in the whole history of the Renaissance. In a series of brilliant campaigns, lasting only four years, he had mastered a great part of Italy, and was disputing supreme power with the Pope himself when he fell fighting at Mendavia. Cæsar Borgia secured the services of Leonardo as military architect, and in one of the painter's little notebooks we read, hurriedly scribbled before some journey undertaken for his master, little memoranda, strange tokens of the preoccupation of the moment: "Riding-boots—Boxes in custom-house—Ask for travelling-bags—Frame of eyeglass." We seem to see another Leonardo here, keen, alert, booted and spurred, ready for action.

Perhaps the best known of Leonardo's pictures is the "Monna Lisa" of the Louvre, recently stolen by an Italian workman from the Gallery, and found after many months in Florence. We are told that Leonardo lingered with great love over the painting of this portrait, unwilling to pronounce it finished, and while the lady sat to him in all her mysterious loveliness, he gave orders that musicians should constantly play, so that her lips should for ever

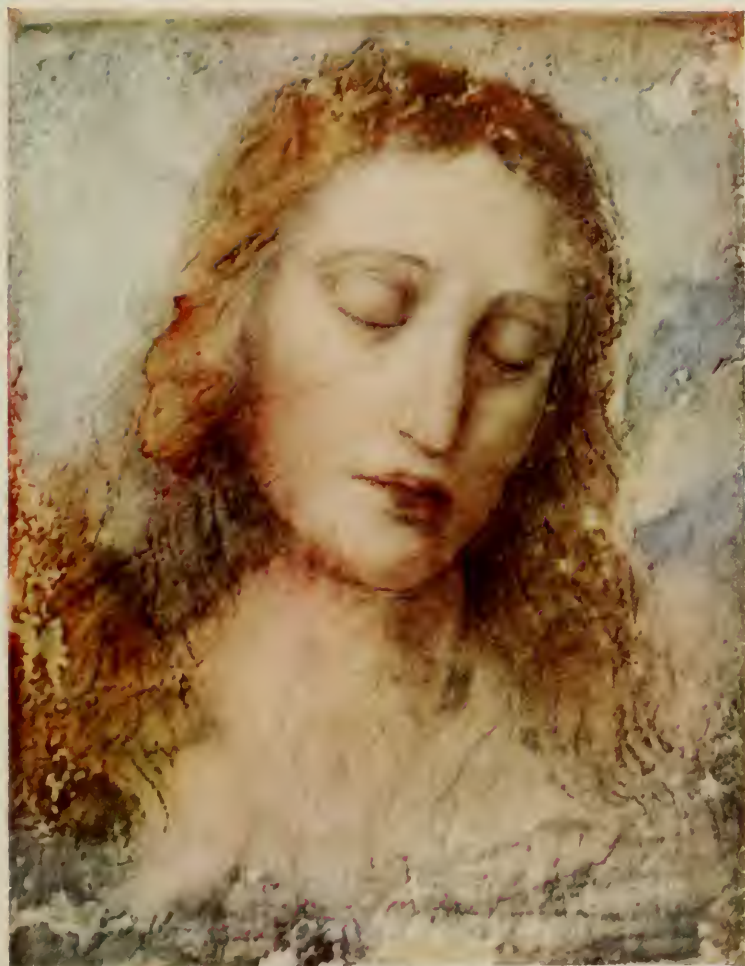
## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

smile, as at harmonious melodies. Monna Lisa was herself a noble Neapolitan lady, the third wife of a Florentine gentleman, Francesco del Giocondo. We have two other pictures by Leonardo in the Louvre, one the portrait of Lucrezia Crivelli, always called the "Belle Ferronnière," known by the jewelled band worn across her forehead; the other the young John Baptist, the beautiful youth, with the incomprehensible smile and the uplifted finger.

Leonardo went also to Rome to work for the Pope Leo X., and for him and other patrons he was used to make all kinds of curious toys—lizards that could move, mirrors, transparencies; there was no end to his invention. He occupied himself also in seeking out the strangest methods of preparing oil for painting and varnish for preserving his pictures. He is said to have made little pictures, too, of great beauty, and to have begun many things that were never finished, in his ardour always to plan some new device.

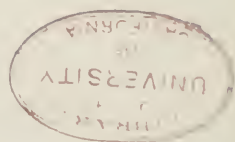
The King of France at this time was François I., a great lover of the arts, who had bought "Monna Lisa" for his own royal collection. He invited Leonardo to come to him to France, and the painter at last consented, in the year 1516, urged partly by quarrels with Michelangelo, who had grown jealous of his fame, and partly because he was by now without a patron in Italy.

In France Leonardo was treated with great



THE HEAD OF CHRIST

(After the work by Leonardo da Vinci, now in the Royal Academy)



## LEONARDO DA VINCI

honour: he was given a yearly pension and a château near Amboise on the Loire to live in. Whilst there he was visited by the Cardinal of Aragon, who has described his travels in a manuscript which we still possess. In it he says Leonardo showed him three pictures, "one of a certain Florentine lady done from the life; the other of S. John the Baptist as a young man; and one of the Madonna and the Child, which are placed in the lap of S. Anne; and all of them most perfect." These two last pictures are in the Louvre to this day; but we do not know for certain which is the portrait of the Florentine lady.

Leonardo died in May, 1519; tradition says, in the arms of King François. All who knew him mourned at his death, and the old chroniclers never weary of describing his excellencies—his enduring beauty; his bodily strength, so great that he could twist a horseshoe as if it had been lead; his liberality; the glory of his painting and of his statuary, both of men and of horses.

Our illustration is a very interesting one. Leonardo was once asked to paint an altar-piece for the chapel of a convent; but before it was finished the monks demurred at the price he demanded. He therefore kept back the picture, sold it as he wished, and the famous "Virgin of the Rocks," now in the Louvre, is the very picture planned for the convent walls. At the same time, however, a copy



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

of Leonardo's picture was made, under his supervision, by a contemporary artist named De Predis, who also painted the wings for the altar-piece, as they had been originally designed. The whole altar-piece complete with its wings has now been hung in the National Gallery, and our illustration is taken from this most accurate copy by De Predis. The picture will repay the most careful study, both for its effect of subdued light and shade and for the extraordinary grey tones of the figures, seated so mysteriously in the midst of the rocky landscape.

### MICHELANGELO (1474-1563)

The old chroniclers tell us that Michelangelo was born under a lucky star, but when we read his life we see it rugged and hard, and the flame of his genius burning brightly in the midst of dark, incessant toil. No other artist of equal genius had lived before him, with the exception perhaps of Leonardo da Vinci, and the difference between the two men was fundamental. Both were citizens of Florence, yet Leonardo treated the Florentines with smiling indifference, and Michelangelo was never happy away from his native city. He was proud of his blood and of the race to which he belonged, far prouder than of his genius. He disliked being called an artist, and he loved his family with an almost religious fervour. His father was a man of

## MICHELANGELO

good, though not noble birth, and he owned land at Settignano, a vine-clad hill above Florence. As a child Michelangelo was put out to be nursed by the wife of a stone-cutter who worked in the quarries there; he used to say that this accounted for his love of chisel and hammer. For he worked in marble as well as in paint, and it is said of him that he would willingly have taken the mountains themselves as material for his mighty chisel. He would never be content to have his blocks chosen for him, but would waste months up in the mountains selecting them for himself. He lived always with great frugality, denying himself every luxury, in order, with his riches, to help his family, who were greedy and preyed upon him. His health was bad throughout his long life, and he was of a suspicious character, fearing to trust even his friends. His energy of mind was so great that it devoured him and separated him from the society of his equals. He was often hated for his arrogance, but in his old age he was respected for his genius, and became the acknowledged leader amongst all the artists and thinkers of his time. His genius was many-sided too: he wrote sonnets, designed as an architect, loved the exact sciences, and was esteemed by all as a man of lofty and high character. But in spite of these gifts he was deeply sad, swayed backwards and forwards by painful doubts, over-conscientious, and, though he terrified even the mighty Popes for

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

whom he worked, he himself lived always under the shadow of fear. Like Leonardo, he was a capable engineer, and he was at one time Surveyor of the Fortifications at Florence.

In person, he was a man of middle height, with wide shoulders, rounded with labour. His forehead was square and lined with thought; his hair was thin, black and curly; his eyes were small and very sad. His nose was broken early in life by a fellow-artist, Torrigiano, who, after serving as a hired soldier, left Italy and sought work in England. This was our gain, for Torrigiano was employed by the young King Henry VIII. to build the beautiful tomb of Henry VII., still to be admired in Westminster Abbey.

Michelangelo lived for ninety years, toiling ceaselessly, yet leaving comparatively few finished works behind him; neither the tomb of Julius II. nor the Chapel of the Medici, his two greatest monuments, were completed at his death. In his old age, the glad time of the Renaissance in Italy was over too, and he lived to see his country in slavery and delivered over to strangers.

At thirteen Michelangelo began work in the studio of Ghirlandajo (1449-1494), the "Garland-maker"—so called because he wrought garlands in gold and silver as his first trade—one of the great painters of Florence, whose pictures are chiefly to be studied in his own city.



## MICHELANGELO

Michelangelo was next transferred to the School for Sculptors, kept up by Lorenzo de' Medici in the gardens of San Marco. Here, in this atmosphere of wide learning and devotion to ancient standards, everything seemed favourable to his development as a great classic sculptor, but when he was still very young, Savonarola, then a man of about forty, began to preach in Florence, and at first it looked as if Michelangelo would be as deeply affected by the preaching of this passionate monk as Botticelli had been. But the effect was not lasting ; the young sculptor fled, conscience-stricken, to Venice, and then at Bologna he consoled himself by reading the poetry of Petrarch, Boccaccio's stories, and the great drama of Dante. Finally he came to Rome, and there freed himself by hard work from the last painful impressions of Savonarola's teaching.

The unfinished picture of the Entombment in the National Gallery was probably painted by Michelangelo while he was at Bologna. You may perhaps be disappointed when you first look at this picture, and miss the beauty of colour to which you have become accustomed. But if you are patient, you will end by seeing a new beauty of line in this half-naked Christ, sustained by two Angels, and in His Mother, her face convulsed with suffering, sitting at the foot of the Cross, her arms wide-stretched to Heaven. You will see, too, that the supreme excellence of his work lies in his mastery

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

of the whole anatomy of the human body rather than in his colour. There is in the Diploma Gallery another early example of his work, a sculptured bas-relief of the Virgin and Child. You may see it when you go to look at Leonardo's Virgin on the knees of S. Anne, and, standing in front of them, you may well be grateful for such beauty ; less fortunate people would cross stormy seas and undertake perilous journeys to find two such masterpieces.

In all Michelangelo's work an air of almost pagan liberty seems to reign, yet through it runs a deep note of sadness. His young men have a look of immortal youth, but on their faces is the severity of manhood ; his women are goddesses in form, yet they brood with a kind of tender melancholy, as you see in one of his greatest works, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, decorated by him at the wish of Julius II., Raphael's patron. This ceiling we can still see to-day, and we can never sufficiently wonder at its perfections. It is divided into nine pictures, illustrating subjects from the Old Testament ; in the niches between, sit seven Prophets and five Sibyls, grand brooding figures, foretelling the birth of the Messiah. One of the most moving of the pictures is the "Creation of Adam," who lies in youthful beauty, languidly, on the hill-side, just touched into life by the Finger of God the Father, on Whose other side you see Eve, with innocent face and soft round eyes of wonder. In the picture

## MICHELANGELO

of the Expulsion of our first parents from Paradise you will be reminded of the Massaccio fresco on the same subject, which Michelangelo had studied in Florence as a boy. It is difficult to look long at these pictures because of the great height of the ceiling; but when you strain your eyes to see them, think with how much more discomfort they must have been painted. Michelangelo was four years at work on them, four sombre, terrible years, fighting against constant fatigue, damp walls, and practical difficulties of all kinds, including money troubles to satisfy the greed of his family.

The chapel was thrown open to the public on All Saints' Day, 1512, and the people applauded loudly this marvellous work, "full of the Spirit of God, Who knows how to slay and how to make alive." But the incessant labour had told on Michelangelo's health; he writes of himself, "My mind is as stupefied as my body." He turned for consolation to new work, and attempted to finish the tomb of Julius II.; the colossal statue of Moses now in Rome is the best fragment of the tomb left to us. But he was soon interrupted by the new Pope, Leo X., who, though he was unable to grasp the sad genius of Michelangelo, and reserved all his favours for Raphael, could not afford to neglect the sculptor's claims, and insisted on his going to Florence to rebuild the façade of the church of his Medici ancestors, San Lorenzo.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

The two did not, however, work well together, and the next eight years were full of trouble, quarrelling, and wasted effort for Michelangelo. Many tragic events were happening in his land; Rome was sacked by mercenaries, and the Medici, who had always befriended him, were banished from Florence. Another Pope, Clement VII., himself one of the Medici, ordered him to design a monument in their honour in the new sacristy of the Church of San Lorenzo. This great tomb was not finished till 1545, and you can still see it with the two solemn figures of the Medici, armed as warriors of ancient Rome, and the lovely reclining forms, representing, so they say, Dawn and Twilight, Morning and Night.

For the last thirty years of his life Michelangelo lived continuously in Rome, years sad on the whole, but cheered by the friendship of a lady, Vittoria Colonna, the granddaughter of that Duke of Urbino whom Piero della Francesca painted, and belonging, through him, to one of the noblest families in Italy, in whom the very spirit of the Renaissance dwelt. Her society was, till the time of her death, his great consolation; she inspired his finest sonnets, she turned his thoughts back to holy things, for the tumult of Luther's teaching had by this time reached Italy and was stirring up men's minds to withstand his doctrines by believing with greater strictness those of the Catholic faith.

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It is strange to think of Michelangelo, with his rough, domineering manners, living constantly in such surroundings, but another of his friends, Donna Argentina Malaspina, wrote of him : " When he liked, he could be a gentleman of fine and seductive manners, equalled by none in Europe." Europe, indeed, delighted to do him honour. François I. and Catherine de' Medici in France tried to gain him to work for them ; Cosimo de' Medici made him sit down by his side ; and the young Francesco, Cosimo's son, received him cap in hand.

And still the old man lived on, lived even to welcome Titian when he visited Rome in 1545, perhaps at his own quiet home near the Forum of Trajan, where he loved to work far into the night, a cardboard helmet of his own invention on his head, into which he used to stick his lighted candle. We are told that one day a friend sent his servant with forty pounds of candles as a present for this night-work. Michelangelo hated to receive gifts of any kind, and told the man roughly to return them to his master. The servant, wishing to get rid of his load, said : " Rather than do that I will set light to them all here in your garden," and began to undo the parcel. The idea of such wastefulness conquered the old man's pride, and he accepted the gift.

Every day he rode in the Campagna, and he, who had never cared much for nature, grew to love



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

the calm of the autumn woods. Once even, when he had been forced to fly from Rome by the threatened invasion of the Spanish troops, he wrote on his return : "I have left the best part of myself there, for, in truth, peace is to be found nowhere but in forests."

It is curious to note how differently his contemporaries felt about nature. Leonardo, Perugino, Raphael, and Titian all observed natural scenery closely, and their finest pictures have often beautiful landscapes for their backgrounds. Michelangelo made no use of such backgrounds, and despised especially the landscapes of the Flemish painters—"Odds and ends of ruined cottages," he wrote, "green fields shaded by trees, rivers and bridges, lots of little figures dotted about—they call that landscape."

Up to the last Michelangelo stood all day at his work. But in the February of his ninetieth year he fell ill with a fever. He tried to ride out as usual, but the weather was cold, and he himself so weak that he was forced to return to his own fire-side. There, on February 18, a Friday, about five in the afternoon, just as daylight was fading, he died. "His proud spirit had escaped the tyranny of Time and entered the Kingdom of Eternity."

Artists throughout all times have honoured his great name. Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote of him that it would be glory and distinction enough for any

## MICHELANGELO

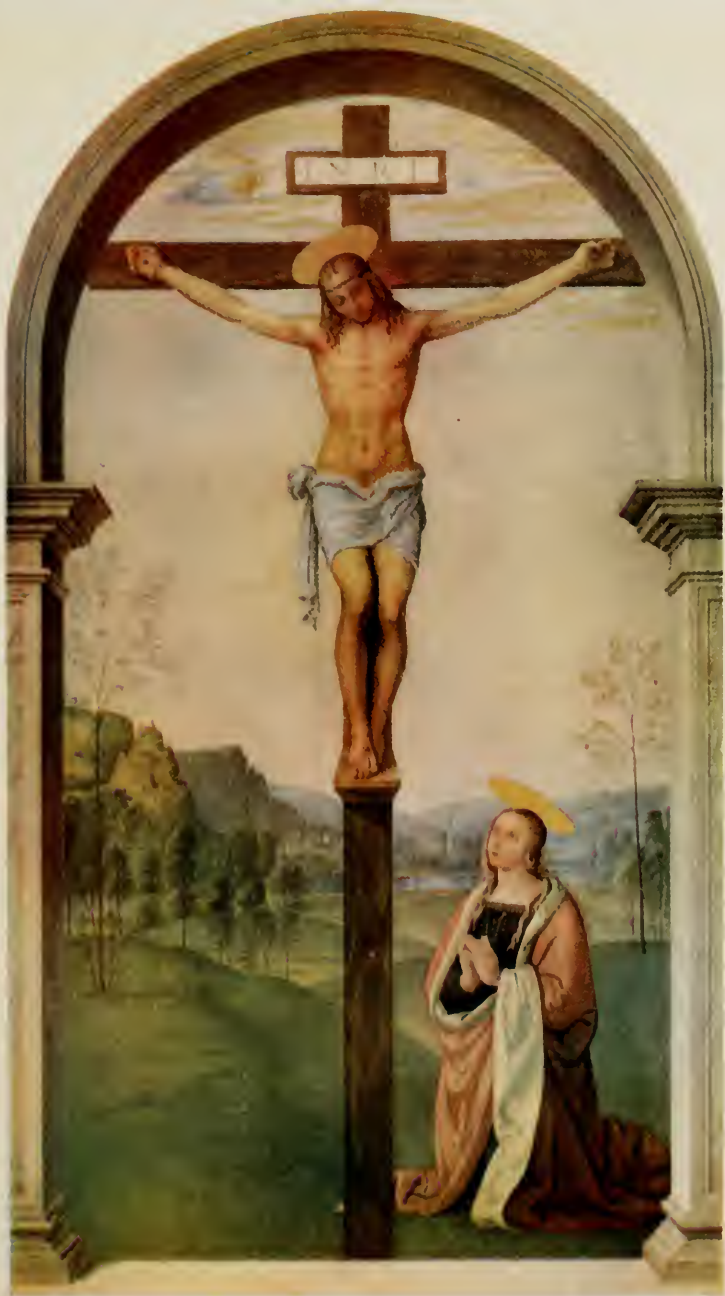
artist to kiss the hem of his garment. And it is in just such an attitude only that he can be approached by any of us ; patience and humility must teach us to know him, for, as he himself has written : “ Good painting is a music and a melody which only intellect can appreciate, and with great difficulty.”



## CHAPTER IV

PERUGINO (1446-1523)

LIKE Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino was a pupil of Verrocchio, and in his youth he is said to have worked under Piero della Francesca, from whom he learned the laws of perspective. A writer of the time praises him for his knowledge of these laws, coupling his name with that of Leonardo. With Leonardo, too, he learned to paint in oils. Up till now painters had mixed their colours with the white of eggs, which is called painting in tempera. But the new way of mixing them with oil had recently been introduced by the Flemish painters, and had gradually become universal. In other respects, however, Perugino lagged behind the great artists of his age, not caring to study anatomy, and earning from Michelangelo the name of that "blockhead in art." He was a patient, steady worker, painting the same subjects again and again, and finding a ready sale for them, merchants even buying his pictures in order to sell them in foreign lands, just as picture-dealers do now. He paints with an exquisite finish, and in his colours pure sunshine



# THE CRUCIFIXION

*(After the central portion of the fresco by Rossellino in the Church of S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi at Florence.)*



## PERUGINO

seems to bask, but their very brightness is monotonous, because there are no lights and shadows in them, such as we find later in Bellini's pictures. He did not care either to fill his landscapes with details taken from nature; if you study our illustration from his picture of the Crucifixion, you will find the same surroundings which recur in many of his pictures. The same trees raise their light and feathery branches, the same mountains dream placidly in the distance, the same calm river reflects the trees on its surface. This picture is, like all his work, perfectly balanced; it breathes peace and quietness. If you go to see his "Madonna and Child with the Archangels Michael and Raphael" in the National Gallery, you will notice the same characteristics; there are the same trees, the same kind of landscape, the same soft expression, even on the face of the warlike Michael, the same delicate finish in the painting of the fish slung from the wrist of the little Tobias, whom Raphael leads to heal his father of his blindness. In all times people have liked to possess that to which their eye is accustomed, and you will not wonder that Perugino sold his pictures easily. He even loved the money he made too well, we are told; nor must we blame him overmuch for that, because as a boy he had been poor, and as a young man he had known hunger and want. However that may be, he lived to be old, "a noble,

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

gracious, and quiet labourer," painting up to the last, and dying, in the end, of the plague, that scourge of the Middle Ages.

### RAPHAEL (1483-1520).

Raphael, the great painter, whose name you certainly know, was a pupil of Perugino. So famous was he, even in his own day, that the very hour and day of his birth have been handed down to us. He was born at three o'clock on a Good Friday morning in the city of Urbino, where his father lived, a painter and a poet too. He was taken while still young to Perugia to learn painting. He was quick to learn, and, with the humility of genius, he studied the work of many masters of his art. In Florence the frescoes of Massaccio were a source of inspiration to him. He learnt much also from the living masters, Leonardo and Michelangelo. The best example of a picture painted by Raphael under this influence is in the Brera at Milan. It is a picture of the Betrothal of the Virgin to S. Joseph. In the spacious background a many-sided temple stands, crowning a broad flight of steps. Quite in the foreground of the picture the betrothal group is arranged with delicate simplicity; behind the Virgin, whose eyes are modestly downcast, is a group of maidens, dressed in the fashion of Florentine ladies of the time; on Joseph's

## RAPHAEL

left hand one of the rejected suitors breaks the barren rod over his knee ; the rod that blossomed is borne by Joseph, the accepted spouse. Raphael must himself have been proud of this picture, for he has signed his name in full on the front of the temple, with the date in Roman figures, MDIIII.

There is one of his portraits in Florence which shows directly Leonardo's influence ; it is the portrait of a lady, Maddalena Doni. She is sitting, her hands crossed in her lap, her whole bearing strangely like Leonardo's famous "Monna Lisa." In the drawing for this picture, now in the Louvre, the likeness is still more striking. Her head is drawn against a landscape bounded by two columns, and it has been suggested that if we could remove "Monna Lisa's" frame, which is not a contemporary one, we should find in Leonardo's picture these same two columns, proving more closely their connection.

The year of the painting of "The Betrothal" we find Raphael in Florence, and there he stayed for four years, during which he painted many well-known works. I will tell you of two, both in the National Gallery. The first is the great "Ansidei Madonna," so called from the noble family in Perugia for whom Raphael painted this altar-piece. The picture is finely composed, but is not marked by any great individuality—that is to say, we seem to have seen often before the high-throned Madonna



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

under her canopy, the Babe on her lap, and the two attendant Saints; but there is in it an air of large quiet and dignity, and such perfect workmanship, we could hardly find a better example of Raphael's Florentine period. The second picture shows us a single figure, and that is a type of composition that Raphael often painted. Catherine of Alexandria, the virgin martyr, stands in her green dress leaning against the wheel, the symbol of her martyrdom; behind is a fair landscape, in front a little dandelion gone to seed. The picture is painted in colours so transparent and delicate that they seem to be the attributes of the Saint herself.

In 1508, at the age of twenty-five, Raphael set out for Rome. He went under the happiest auspices at the invitation of the great Pope, Julius II., who wished him to paint certain rooms in his palace of the Vatican. Not long after his arrival he painted the Pope's portrait. Raphael was greatly esteemed for his portraits, but we are told that he refused many commissions, painting only such persons as he chose thus to honour. This portrait of Julius II. is one of the first to represent a great historical personage. There are two portraits of him still existing—duplicates—and so exactly alike that no one knows which is the original. They are both in Florence. Another replica is in the National Gallery. It shows us the great Pope in his chair of state, wearing his crimson cap, and cape lined with white fur. His





*Anderson*

POPE LEO X.

*(After the picture by Raphael in the Pitti Gallery, Florence.)*



## RAPHAEL

white robe falls in soft fine pleats. In his right hand is a handkerchief. It is the same Julius who stands out in the pages of history, full of fire and ceaseless energy, always plotting and planning, never cast down by failure, secure in his own boundless strength. Though a magnificent patron of the arts, he was no lover of books, and when Michelangelo wanted to paint him with a book in his hand, he scorned the idea, demanding a sword.

But Raphael's finest portrait is that of Pope Leo X., the successor of Julius. Leo was one of the Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was, like his father, lavish in his liberality, loving art and beauty, well read, and embodying in his tastes all that was most gorgeous in the Renaissance. His reign introduced in Rome an age of gold after the austerities of Julius's iron rule. As you see in the illustration, Raphael has painted him with his magnifying-glass and illuminated missal on the table before him, showing him thus as the great art-patron of his time. It is the picture of a man still young and full of bodily strength; he was made Pope at the age of thirty-eight. His generous, pleasure-loving face contrasts vividly with the look of bleached old age on the features of the earlier Pope.

During the reign of Leo X., Raphael painted several portraits, one of which, dated 1516, now hangs in the Louvre, in the same Salon Carré where "Monna Lisa" sits and smiles. It is the

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

portrait of his friend, Baldassare Castiglione, a bearded man of middle age, remarkable for the beauty of his expression. This has always been considered as a masterpiece, and we know that both Rubens and Rembrandt admired it so much that they desired to copy it.

The cartoons, illustrating stories from the lives of the Apostles, which Raphael designed for Leo X. as tapestries in the Sistine Chapel, are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The tapestries were first shown to the Roman public, in all their fresh beauty, on December 26, 1519, that being S. Stephen's Day, and they were received with great enthusiasm. After the death of Leo X. the cartoons remained in the factory at Brussels, where the tapestries had been made. Some disappeared, but in the seventeenth century Rubens discovered the seven remaining pictures, and advised Charles I. to buy them. They were copied in tapestry at the factories at Mortlake by Charles's orders. William III. had the cartoons properly mounted, and ordered Christopher Wren to build a special gallery for them at Hampton Court, where they hung till they were removed to the Victoria and Albert Museum. The original tapestries still exist in the Vatican. The effect of these large cartoons is strongly dramatic. The Apostles, in "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," are real, hard-working fisher-people, their boats weighed down with the results of their toil ;

## RAPHAEL

birds circle round them in the air, waiting for their share of the spoil, and stand, their beaks wide open, on the shore. "The Healing of the Lame Man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple" is, perhaps, the one of all the cartoons which lends itself best to be woven in tapestry. Raphael has introduced into it the twisted column of the Vatican Basilica, which was said to have been brought from the Temple at Jerusalem, and around throng the worshippers in their brilliant dresses. Behind glow the sanctuary lights.

Wherever you go, whatever galleries you visit, you will find examples of Raphael's industry and genius; but you must learn to distinguish between the simpler Madonnas of his Florentine period and the more brilliant pictures of the same subject painted in Rome. To the first belong the "Madonna in the Meadow," in Vienna, and the so-called "Belle Jardinière," in the Louvre, in both of which the Holy Child stands by the Madonna's knee, while the little S. John kneels in adoration. In the Madonna from the Tempi Palace, now at Munich, the Babe is a most human tiny creature, held close to His Mother's heart, and half turning round His baby-face from that safe refuge. In Florence is the "Madonna of the Goldfinch," where the two children stand in a flowering meadow at the Virgin's knees, little John Baptist with a goldfinch in his hand, tempting the Holy Child to play.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

To the Roman period belongs "The Madonna with the Diadem" in the Louvre, where the scene is composed with more conscious art. The Virgin, on her knees, is drawing back the veil from the face of the sleeping Child ; in the background is a ruined arch on a hill, the first time that monuments of ancient times are introduced into pictures. The well-known "Sistine Madonna" dates also from this time. It was painted for the Convent of San Sisto at Piacenza, bought many years after by the Elector of Saxony, and given by him to the Dresden Gallery. The picture is framed by two curtains drawn back on each side ; the Madonna, as Queen of Heaven, appears above the clouds, her Child in her arms. S. Barbara and the Pope Sixtus kneel, one on each side ; below, two winged cherubim regard the glorious vision with watchful eyes.

The last five years of his life Raphael passed without any interruption in Rome, ceaselessly employed, and applauded by everybody as the greatest artist of his day. He was made papal Chamberlain, and neighbouring Princes vied with one another to secure works from his ever-busy brush. He was surrounded by a large number of pupils, some of whom appear to have lived in his house. He was much beloved by them, and knew how to put each one to the work best suited to his abilities. Even the animals loved him, we are told, for his gentleness ; and his house was full of gifts



## RAPHAEL

from his admirers, which he never found time to arrange. His pictures were eagerly sought after in Flanders, in France, and in Germany. Albert Dürer himself sent him a portrait, and exchanged drawings with him.

Towards the end of March, 1520, an agreement was drawn up, by which Raphael was to buy a piece of ground in the best quarter of Rome, in order to build himself a palace for his treasures. Some ten days later he died, after a few days' illness, at the age of thirty-seven, to the bitter grief, not only of Rome, but of the whole of Italy. He died, as he had been born, on a Good Friday. All Rome flocked to his studio, where he lay in state, and they buried him in the Pantheon. Their "divine painter," having all his life shown a tolerant love for all that was best in the old as in the new ways of thought, lay thus appropriately in the old temple of all the gods, consecrated to the Christian religion by the Pope, Gregory the Great. The burial-place of Raphael becomes in this way his best epitaph, for in his work we see embodied the very spirit of the Renaissance in its most human and wholesome form.



## CHAPTER V

### MANTEGNA (1431-1506).

A FEW miles from Venice lies the town of Padua, famous as giving its name to a well-known school of painters. The greatest of them all was Mantegna, a pupil of the old Paduan painter, Squarcione, who found the boy, as some say, painting in the fields, a shepherd lad like Giotto, but who certainly adopted him, and brought him up as a painter, teaching him to draw from copies of old statues and pictures. He meant to have left the young man all he had, but Mantegna married the daughter of Squarcione's great rival, the Venetian, Bellini, which so much enraged his old master that he never spoke to his pupil again.

Bellini made his son-in-law study the work of Paolo Uccello, of whom you have already heard, and before he was thirty Mantegna was appointed Court painter to Ludovico Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua. Pope Innocent VIII. was another of his patrons, but Mantegna was a proud, independent man, esteeming himself highly, though not unduly, and living his own life in the free, gallant manner of his age. For Mantegna was before all things the child of the Renaissance, delighting in beauty, unwearied in its pursuit. He loved pomp and splendour

## MANTEGNA

too, and spent money freely, buying with passion antiquities from the Greek and Roman times. He was frequently pressed for want of money, and it nearly broke his heart when, on one of these occasions, he was forced to sell his favourite antique, the bust of the Empress Faustina. These treasures from classical times were really necessary to his development as an artist. He cared specially for sculpture, upholding its superiority over the living model; not that he neglected nature either, but he saw real things through the glamour of antiquity, and painted them in that way, which gives his pictures a special interest to us, and a place by themselves in the world of art. You will notice in them that the figures and their draperies are as minutely modelled and finished as if they were indeed sculptured, though at the same time they express action and emotion as no statue can do. He loved to draw great frescoes of triumphal processions taken from the conquering Roman times, with torches and waving pennons, palm-branches and garlands of laurel. In Hampton Court you may see such a Triumph, a set of nine pictures, painted by Mantegna in tempera on twilled linen to decorate the theatre in the ducal palace at Mantua. It is the "Triumph of Julius Cæsar," a gorgeous procession of spoil-laden cars, covered with all the emblems of a conquering host, suits of armour, weapons, statues, busts—all things Mantegna loved himself to possess.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

Our illustration is from a Mantegna in the Louvre. It is painted in light, gay colours, and is a good example of the curious rocky backgrounds masters of the Paduan School so loved to paint. The picture represents Mount Parnassus, the abode of the gods. Enthroned on high are Mars and Venus, Mars fully equipped as the god of war. Below, on each side of this central group, are Apollo and Mercury; Apollo plays his lyre and to its music dance "the Muses, the Nine," circling round in a graceful measure. Mercury, with a winged horse, stands ready for travel, hat on head, caduceus in hand; he is the messenger among the gods. The picture is alive with gracious movement and a kind of measured Olympian jollity.

Among the pictures by Mantegna in the National Gallery the "Virgin and Child Enthroned" is counted one of his finest works. The Virgin sits in dignified humility; before her is a stony ground, which yet bears minute flowery plants; behind, the ilexes and lemon-trees remind us that Mantegna was famed for the accuracy of his leaf-drawing. S. John Baptist, an heroic figure, lightly draped, supports her on one side; on the other, Mary Magdalen, with her tiny box of very precious ointment, holds up her cloak, which covers half of her elaborate dress, for, according to tradition, the Magdalen is always dressed in the fashion of the day.



*Mantegna*

PARNASSUS.

*(After the picture by Mantegna in the Louvre.)*



## CRIVELLI

It is interesting to note that Mantegna was named as one of a noble company of artists by his contemporary, the poet Ariosto. "Leonardo, Andrea Mantegna, Gian Bellini," he writes, joining in one line the three immortal names. And for us his memory lives, largely on account of the great influence he exercised over the early beginnings of the famous school of painting in Venice.

CRIVELLI (1430-1493).

Before we leave Mantegna and his way of painting, I must tell you a little about an artist who, though of Venetian descent, painted far more in the manner of Mantegna, the Paduan. This was Crivelli, who, apparently the pupil of Squarcione, lived most of his life far away at Ascoli, near Naples, and being thus separated from his fellow-craftsmen, painted independently, being little affected by the movements of his day. He used tempera, as the old artists had done, employing gold lavishly, and the whole effect of this gorgeous colouring in his clear, bright medium is very pleasing. He adorned his pictures with delightful festoons of flowers and fruit, introducing also ornaments borrowed from classical architecture, such as arabesques and bas-reliefs. His pictures abound in delicate detail, rich patterned brocades, sculptured heads on the façades of his buildings, carved and painted ceilings,



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

hangings with intricate patterns, woven or embroidered. We have a perfect example of his art in the Annunciation of the National Gallery. The little Virgin kneels at her prie-dieu in just such a finely adorned bedroom as the Italian ladies of Crivelli's time loved to have in their palazzi. On a shelf above her bed her little household goods are neatly piled, as well as her little store of books; her bed is heaped with cushions. A peacock suns himself on the ledge of the open loggia overhead, where caged birds and flying pigeons, flowers growing in bowls and pots, give a happy picture of the open-air life of Southern Italy. In the paved court outside, S. Gabriel kneels, sumptuously apparelled and accompanied by the patron saint of Ascoli, who bears on his knee a little model of the city itself. On the opposite side of the court a little girl peeps out to see the heavenly visitors. The picture is signed in full, below the arabesques of the one door-post; the date, 1486, is written on the other. Ferdinand II. of Naples made Crivelli a knight, and the artist was proud of his honour, invariably adding the word "Miles" after his signature. We do not know even the date of his death with any certainty, nor did he found any school of painting; but the work of Crivelli deserves to be studied for its warmth and charm, and because in his pictures we see so much of the full, glowing life of the Renaissance.



## CHAPTER VI

WE now come to Venice, whose school of painting, though developed nearly a hundred years later than the Florentine, was perhaps the finest of all. This pre-eminence of Venice comes largely from the fact that it was her painters who, as the fifteenth century died and the sixteenth began, produced that depth and richness of colouring which distinguishes their work from the pure, gay colouring of the earlier masters.

### GIOVANNI BELLINI (1428-1516).

The first great painter of this school was Giovanni Bellini, who, in his long life of nearly ninety years, became a master worthy of representing the proud Venetians with their Princes and Doges, now arrived at the height of their power. You will remember how, in their early days, the Venetians had depended for their art on the Byzantine painters, working in mosaics; since those days they had not really produced an art of their own, although Giotto's work was well known at Padua, only a few miles away. Their favourite art had been that of architecture, and their beautiful palaces, rising majestically from

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

the lagoons, had expressed nobly their love of line. Shortly before the birth of Giovanni Bellini, Pisanello had come to Venice to paint the interior of the Doge's palace, which may well have inspired the Venetians with a desire to work for themselves. Then Jacopo, the father of Giovanni, had learnt his art in the school of Squarcione at Padua, and had, as I have told you, given his daughter in marriage to Mantegna. Jacopo's notebooks, full of drawings for the use of his pupils, may be seen in the Print-room of the British Museum; in them you see careful studies, taken from the everyday life of the time, market-carts with huge tilts, sketches of the wild animals which people were beginning to bring into the country as curiosities. The elder son, Gentile, known as the "Master of Carpaccio," was a great artist too, who loved to paint the pomp and splendour of Venetian life. But Giovanni's work is of the very highest importance, because he stands at the head of a number of great artists whose pictures are all known by their richness of colour and nobility of expression. It was a group of men who painted altar-pieces and sacred pictures of many kinds, marked by a peculiarly glowing atmosphere of distinction and solemnity. Unlike Mantegna, Bellini did not try to represent such subjects with a quaint sort of reality; he endowed his figures with a dignified grace, and insisted especially on their moral and spiritual beauty.

## GIOVANNI BELLINI

The Venetians were the first artists to paint on canvas, instead of on panels of wood. The best wood to paint on was maple or poplar, neither of which could be got easily in that city of the waters. Fir-wood they could obtain by water from Germany and its wide forests, but they preferred canvas, which did not crack, and could be cut to any given shape, or rolled up for journeys.

Giovanni was employed, as Pisanello had been, to decorate the palace of the Doge, but unfortunately his paintings in the great Council Chamber have been destroyed. His own brother, Gentile, and Carpaccio, of whom I shall tell you later, were his assistants in this work. Gentile was lent by the Doge to the Sultan at Constantinople, and, in spite of the laws of Mahomet forbidding portraiture, the Sultan sat to the artist for a picture, finished on November 25, 1480. It still exists, and we see from it where Gentile studied the complicated folds of the rich turban, which he afterwards introduced so often into his pictures.

We may study Giovanni Bellini's work in the National Gallery: first there is to be seen a very early picture of his, illustrating a subject rarely treated in art, "The Blood of the Redeemer." Crivelli has painted it too, but in Bellini's work we have much more sense of atmosphere, and the landscape behind the central Figure is interesting with ruins and castellated buildings. A curious example

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

of his love of detail may be noted here. On the low marble panels behind the figure of the Risen Saviour satyrs are seen, carved in the true classical style, but the heathen sacrifice they are celebrating is a symbol of the one great Sacrifice of the Christian faith. The blood which pours from our Lord's wounded side is received by a little kneeling Angel, who holds the chalice. Behind lies the landscape in the twilight of early dawn. "The Agony in the Garden" is of rather later date. In it Christ kneels on a grassy mound, surrounded by a low wattled fence. The wearied Apostles sleep in the foreground; behind, the half-naked Roman soldiers are seen advancing. The special interest of the picture is its lighting, and you will notice that the clouds are rosy in the sunset, while twilight is falling, which gives a corresponding light and shadow to the figures in the picture. This is an innovation, as hitherto there had been no attempt made by artists to connect their foregrounds with their backgrounds as far as light was concerned.

The third picture in the National Gallery belongs quite to Bellini's old age. Peter Martyr, the subject of this early landscape, was one of the Inquisitors of the thirteenth century, murdered in revenge for his persecution of a certain noble Italian family. The pursuit of the Saint and his murder are dramatically shown, the forest is thick with trees, and the wood-cutters placidly continue their work



THE MADONNA AND CHILD ENTHRONED,

*(From the centre panel of the triptych now preserved in the name of Bellini in the Church of the Frari at Venice.)*





## GIOVANNI BELLINI

of felling the trees by the roadside. To the left of the picture is a lovely little town with its arcades and bridges, and a church perched high on the hill beyond.

For the last thirty years of his life Bellini cared increasingly to paint two subjects only, the Madonna and Child and the Dead Christ at the Tomb. Our illustration is a fine example of the former subject; it is the "Madonna and Child," from the triptych in the Church of the Frari in Venice. It is one of the most perfect and best preserved of Bellini's works, finished and delivered over to the convent in 1488. In this splendid picture you will admire the noble pose of the Virgin; the full, dignified folds of her blue cloak, the breadth and balance of the whole composition, and the gracious charm of the boy-angels under the pedestal at her feet, with their tiny tunics and their downy wings.

Bellini painted, we are told, many portraits, most of which have unhappily perished. But we have one magnificent example in the National Gallery, the sixty-seventh Doge, Leonardo Loredano. You know the picture well, I expect, for it is often reproduced, and in it you will recognize the born ruler of men, full of quiet dignity, patience, and self-control, one of the greatest of the Doges, who, like our Cromwell, made "all the neighbour Princes fear him."



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

This self-control and reasonableness are characteristic of Bellini's own work, and are, indeed, qualities of the true Venetian. He knew how to express human passions, but always with exquisite judgment, which never allowed him to become effeminate or sentimental.

## CHAPTER VII

CARPACCIO (1450-1522)

CARPACCIO, who worked first, as I have said, under Gentile Bellini, was one of the moderns in the early sixteenth century; he painted entirely in oil, and his fascinating work can best be studied in Venice, where he worked all his life. There you can see, in a series of nine pictures, his version of the story of S. Ursula and the eleven thousand Virgins, and from them you can reconstruct the daily life of the Venice of his time, not only outside, in the busy stirring streets and water-courses, but indoors, in the decorated rooms, where the noble Venetians slept or ate. The bed-chamber of the Princess Ursula, for she was a King's daughter, is a model room for any girl; in it you see the tall bed with its twisted columns supporting the canopy, and the well-smoothed sheets and tidy pillow, where she sleeps serenely. Neatness and order reign everywhere: in the folded clothes on the chair, the little crown laid aside for the night, the well-trained pinks growing in their beautiful pot on the window-sill—no detail is wanting in the fair room, breathing peace. Again, in the picture showing the arrival of

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

her suitors, you see the gay gallants of the day, slim figures in long hose, hawk on wrist. You see the ships that brought them—Venetians knew all about ships—the wind in their tossing pennants. In the picture of Ursula being interviewed by the King her father, you must notice that a picture hangs on the wall of the room, one of the first instances of a picture painted in a picture.

The Princess had refused to marry until she had, accompanied by her Virgins, made a journey to convert the heathen. Our illustration is from this series; S. Ursula had sailed to Rome to receive the papal blessing, and had now reached Cologne. But the city was found to be in the hands of pagan soldiers. You see the waiting men-at-arms, the landing-stage, on which the spotted dog lies idly; Carpaccio delighted to paint dogs and birds in his pictures. Everywhere is life and movement, in the flags floating from the towers of the city and from the little tents pitched by the riverside, in the clouds drifting across the sky, while the good ship's sails are furled after her voyage. This is the dramatic moment of the whole story, when the Princess is to receive the crown of martyrdom. The man-at-arms, who is to shoot her through the heart, is standing with his bow all ready strung. But the Princess, undaunted, harangues the infidels from her ship; you can see her little head with its crown. Behind her is the Pope with his triple



*Anderson.*

THE ARRIVAL OF S. URSULA.

*(After the picture by V. Carpaccio in the Accademia, Venice.)*



## CARPACCIO

crown; he had apparently joined her on her pious journey. And then there are the crowding heads of her companions, those sweet Virgins, who, in all their wanderings, felt neither hunger nor thirst, and kept always clean, without the need of any washing. It is the end of all things earthly for S. Ursula and for them: here in Cologne they were all murdered by the sword; perhaps the raven, the bird of ill omen, sits on the branching tree as the symbol of disaster.

Little is known of Carpaccio's private life, but his pictures in Venice are memorial enough, and they will always keep his memory bright for us.

## GIORGIONE (1477-1511).

At the same time that Leonardo da Vinci was the glory of Florence, there lived a painter in Venice, greater even than Bellini, called Giorgione, or "Big George," because he was tall and splendid to look upon. He was born at a little place lying between the mountains and the sea called Castelfranco, but he was brought up in Venice. He sang, we are told, and played divinely, but he excelled all others in painting. He worked in oil, like Carpaccio, and, like Leonardo, he made special use of contrasting masses of light and shade. His colours have a wonderful depth and richness, and whatever subject



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

he touched he inspired with beauty and dignity. He died, unhappily, of the plague when only thirty-four, and very few of his pictures are known, yet these few are of such extraordinary and romantic charm that they stand out from other men's work, as you will yourselves see.

Our illustration is taken from one of his most famous pictures, the altar-piece of the Virgin and Child in the Church of Castelfranco. Look at the picture first only as a design: you see how finely balanced it is, how broadly planned. Then, looking at the figures themselves, notice the majesty of the Mother with her Child, although she is perfectly human too; the Knight, S. Liberale, standing superb with his pennant; S. Francis, our Saint from Assisi, with his girdle of rope, and his hand outstretched, showing his pierced palm, the "Stigmata" received from God in a vision. Behind is the lovely landscape of Giorgione's home, the mellow sunlight on the distant mountains, with the castellated tower on the hill near by, that gives the little town its name. In this picture the landscape is used in the way already familiar to us as a background only, but Giorgione was the first to paint landscape for its own sake, and then to place a figure or two in it. A picture by him in a private collection in Venice, called "The Family of Giorgione," is an example of this. It represents a wooded landscape, through which a little river runs, past a town and under a



THE VIRGIN AND CHILD ENTHRONED BETWEEN ST. MICHAEL AND ST. FRANCIS

*(From the altar-piece by Giorgione in the Church of Castelfranco)*



## GIORGIONE

bridge, almost bathing the feet of a gipsy woman who is sitting on the grass suckling her child. Opposite to her, on the other side of the stream, a warrior, resting on his lance, is looking at her; behind, heavy storm-clouds are lowering. The picture possesses an exciting charm and a sense of mystery in its beauty greater, I think, than you will find in the work of any other painter.

Another picture by Giorgione is the "Sleeping Venus" in the Dresden Gallery, a lovely nude figure, lying on the grass in the foreground of a wide landscape. You, perhaps, have seen copies of the head, propped on the right arm, the soft sleeping face, hair parted in the middle, full lips pouted a little with the gentle breath—all repose and healthful rest. The picture you will probably see first by this great and rare master is "The Concert," in the Louvre, where, sitting on the ground in a garden, in a rich mellow light, musicians play on instruments that Giorgione himself handled, while lovely women listen.

Besides the immense interest of the few pictures we know that are certainly the work of Giorgione, we must remember that his influence on the painters who followed him was extraordinarily great and far-reaching. Chief among them all stands the name of Titian, himself, like Giorgione, a pupil of Bellini.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TITIAN (1477-1576)

THE ninety-nine years of Titian's life were filled with toil, and he has left us a legacy of beauty so great that his very name seems to glow with the reflected glory of his colour. He began to work, they say, when, as a little boy of nine years, he went to Venice to learn painting under Gentile Bellini. But later, when he came to know Giorgione, he left Bellini, and grew to paint so like his new master that their work was often confused, even whilst they were both alive. This did not please Giorgione, as you may well imagine, and the friendship between the two men ended. Titian became famous as a painter of portraits, and no great Prince nor grand lady of his day was content without sitting to him to be painted. His best patron was the famous Emperor, Charles V., of whom he painted many pictures. When the Emperor had not time to give him sittings, Titian would draw a sketch from life, quickly, in a few hours, and finish a great portrait from it afterwards. One of these sketches has been sold lately for a very large sum. The two best-known portraits of

## TITIAN

Charles V. are, first, the Emperor on the battlefield of Mühlberg, now in Madrid, where the conqueror, lance in hand and in full armour, rides a gaily caparisoned horse over a field. The horse's plumes nod magnificently as Charles dashes forward at full gallop, and the picture shows how finely Titian's art could triumph over the difficulty of representing action in commemoration of a given event. The second, painted not long after, is a great contrast. It is now at Munich, and shows the sad-faced Emperor sitting in his chair, pale with ill-health.

Besides portraits, Titian loved to paint landscape, and, born near the Alps, he was able to show the mountains and crags he knew so well, and fill them with the magic of his brush ; for, as Sir Joshua Reynolds said of him long years after, he was so gifted as to endow everything he touched with grandeur and importance. He does not, perhaps, throw the gates of Heaven open to us as some of the earlier painters of whom I have told you, but he showed us a perfect earth, where all is joy and human delight.

We are fortunate enough to possess, in the National Gallery, a glorious picture, painted by Titian for the Duke of Ferrara, who, we are told, himself gave Titian the canvas and the frame for his picture, and only received the finished work after he had written repeatedly to demand it. It is the story of Bacchus and Ariadne, the beautiful story beloved of artists, at the moment when the wine-god



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

with his rabble rout pursues the flying maiden, left desolate by the false-hearted Theseus. In the foreground spring-flowers bloom, the iris, the wild rose, and the columbine, for it is springtime on the shores of Ariadne's island of Naxos, and all around glow the faint blue of the distant mountains and the deeper blue of the sea, washing the cliffs and walls of the little town on its edge. The whole picture, in its setting of solemn trees, with its clashing cymbals, leopard-drawn car, dominated by the splendid fiery figure of the young vine-crowned god, gives the same feeling as Milton's "Comus," of hot, still air, impetuous love, romantic haste; we know it must have happened so. It sets us thinking of the days when the gods were young, and our thoughts fly forward with the flying Ariadne.

The same beautiful manner of subordinating landscape to the story, while making it vital and full of charm, is seen in a very different picture in the same gallery—Titian's "Repose of the Holy Family on their Flight into Egypt." All around the central figures is the lovely play of light and shade, and the subject lends itself to the introduction of many points of homely interest: flocks of sheep, farm-labourers at their daily toil, peasants, and travellers passing by. In the Venice Academy you will see another religious picture, Titian's famous Assumption, in which the Virgin, a grand figure in a blue mantle, is borne upwards to Heaven, where

## TITIAN

the Angel awaits her, bearing her crown of glory. Boy-angels float at her feet, and the Apostles, standing on the earth far below her, stretch their arms upwards, lifting humble eyes to that Heaven which is so soon to envelop her whom they adore.

Another picture in the same gallery is the delightful "Presentation of the Little Virgin at the Temple." This is a good example of the dignity with which Titian clothes any subject he touches. The little maiden mounts the Temple steps all alone, holding up her long skirt so as not to stumble. From the windows and balconies of the surrounding houses people crowd to watch her. In the foreground an old woman sits with her basket of eggs to sell. But the child Virgin is the crown and centre of the picture in all her baby stateliness.

There is still another characteristic side to Titian's genius, his pictures with an allegorical meaning, such as the "Sacred and Profane Love" in the Borghese Gallery in Rome. Here everyone who looks may make his own story and his own interpretation. Against a lovely background of hill and valley two women are seated on the brink of a carved stone fountain; one in the rich, wide-flowing dress of the period is listening, her face half-averted, to the persuasions of the second woman, who, clad only in her own beauty, is holding a little vase in her lifted hand. Between them a dimpled Cupid dabbles his fat arm in the water of the fountain.

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

Titian lived long, and died full of honours: twice his Emperor had sent for him to attend his Court at Augsburg; he had been made a Knight of the Golden Spur, and he bore the title of Count Palatine; his children had been given the rank of nobles, and were considered the equals of those who had four generations of ancestors.

He had, as far as we know, but few pupils, yet for all time painters have continued to go to his pictures for instruction and inspiration; he ranks with Giorgione as one of the greatest colourists of the world.

## CHAPTER IX

LORENZO LOTTO (1476-1553).

LORENZO LOTTO was one of Bellini's pupils. His contemporaries tell us that he was a very upright and Christian man, of a retiring disposition, who spent the greater part of his life among the Dominican monks. He never sought the patronage of the great, and in his old age he fell on evil days, and had to be supported by charity at the Santa Casa of Loreto. The great Titian was his friend, and we possess a letter in which Titian, writing from Augsburg, sends Lotto greetings and words of praise and encouragement for his works. Like other painters of his day, he was much influenced by Giorgione, but his pictures show great individuality, and are always interesting, even mysterious; he makes you want to know more about his sitters, and why he chose to paint the various objects that surround them. As you may guess from his piety, Lotto painted many altar-pieces, but it is by his portraits that we know him best; you may see several of these in the National Gallery. One of them is a portrait-group of himself seated at a table with his wife and two children, the wife a beautiful young woman, with plaited hair

## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

and a gorgeous big-sleeved dress. She holds in her arms the younger child, who stretches out her little fat hands towards a tempting dish of red cherries on the table. Another is a portrait of Agostino del Torre, Professor of Medicine to the University of Padua, and his brother Niccolo. Agostino, in his comfortable, plum-coloured and fur-lined coat is holding in his hand a copy of Galen's works, because Galen was the most famous of all the ancient writers on medicine. Still another of Lotto's portraits was exhibited in London not long ago, a splendid young woman, called Lucrezia, after the famous Roman matron; she is represented in all the pride of her matchless purity with broad, calm brows, in her hand a sketch of an undraped female figure. Lotto's portraits, like Leonardo's, are full of intellectual refinement and inward grace. They do not only represent beautiful outward forms, although Lotto loved much to paint people as he really saw them; they reveal, with a kind of passionate intensity, the inner spirit of his sitters.

### MORONI (1525-1578).

I must now tell you about another portrait-painter, an artist of great merit too, but in a very different manner from Lorenzo Lotto. Moroni's portraits are extraordinarily natural; when we see them, we know that just so the sitters must have looked; we forget the many hundred years that have passed



## MORONI

since they were alive, and we feel that we should recognize them at once if we met them on our daily walks. But for all that, we do not know them intimately, nor recognize them as if we had listened to their talk, or read their books; Moroni never gives us a glimpse into their minds.

We have in the National Gallery seven of his portraits : an ecclesiastic ; a knight ; a lady ; two noblemen in armour, one who has his foot in a kind of splint had perhaps been recently wounded in battle ; a lawyer, carrying a letter on which his own name is written ; and lastly, the well-known tailor, who, holding his shears in his hand, is pausing to look at us with his kind, soft eyes, before he cuts into his cloth. He wears a white doublet covered with minute slashes, and dull red hose ; he is the very prince of tailors. One of the noble warriors is a most magnificent gentleman. We see him full length, in chain armour, with a leathern surcoat, a fine velvet hat and feather on his head, his great plumed helmet on a pedestal by his side. The plumes are all black or white, except a single red one, the only note of colour in the whole picture.

Titian admired Moroni's work, and when sitters from Moroni's native state of Bergamo journeyed to Venice to be painted by Titian, he would send them back to their own country, saying they would find an artist of their own there, than whom no better painter of faces ever existed.



## ITALY AND HER PAINTERS

VERONESE (1528-1588).

Paolo Veronese was named after his birthplace, Verona; but he studied and finally worked in Venice exclusively, and in his pictures shines the rich, sumptuous, glowing life of sixteenth-century Venice. When he settled there in his twenty-seventh year, Titian, though an old man, was still busily at work. Veronese, it is true, never equalled Titian, but he is the only master of his time who even approaches the splendour of the older painter. The subjects which we connect with his name are threefold—sacred, classical, and historical; subjects which he always represents in a vividly dramatic manner as taking place in his own day. Thus, he painted feasts for the refectories of rich convents—Bible feasts, such as that of the Marriage at Cana of Galilee, partaken of in a palace, rich in pillared architecture, open to the blue sky, where the guests wear gorgeous Venetian dresses, and sup on silver plates with glittering cups of gold. He loved to introduce into these feasts strange dwarfs and monkeys, as well as more homely dogs and cats, and in the large picture on this subject, now in the Louvre, you may see the portraits of his friends among the guests; even Titian, the great master, is there, a grey-haired man among the musicians, playing the contrabass in a red damask robe.

We have in the National Gallery one of these crowded canvases, "The Family of Darius before

## VERONESE

the Conquering Alexander," looking for all the world like some superb design for tapestry. The action takes place in a courtyard; Alexander in classical armour receives his conquered foes, while the ladies are dressed in flowing Venetian fashion. In the crowd of onlookers are two Persian women in native dress, and an ugly dwarf, watching the antics of a nimble little monkey. Behind Alexander is the gigantic head of his fabled horse, Bucephalus. In the National Gallery too, but more interesting, and in striking contrast to this crowded picture, is "The Vision of S. Helena," painted by Veronese with reverent simplicity as an altar-piece for a church in Venice. You remember that, before her pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Helena, the mother of Constantine, saw a vision of the True Cross, which she was to discover there. She is represented in full draperies of pale red, seated at an open window, through which the angel-borne Cross appears. The window is indeed ever open to S. Helena as she sleeps, and the sweet air from Heaven fans the forehead of the beautiful, big-limbed woman, who rests her sleeping head on one hand, the other lying quietly on the folds of her ample draperies.

Except on one occasion, when Veronese went in the suite of the Venetian Ambassador to Rome, he lived all his life in Venice, and there died, a great painter, who in his work summed up all the magnificence of his chosen city, then at the very summit of her prosperity.



## PART II

# EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS

### CHAPTER I

WE must now leave Italy, and retrace our steps to about the time when Massaccio was working at Florence—that is to say, in the early fifteenth century; for at that time there were, living in the northern countries of Europe, artists working on their own lines, inspired by an equal though a very different sense of beauty, intent on discovering the same secrets, and putting into their pictures with zealous care their own distinctive habits of thought and feeling. What they cared for most of all was reality, and they reproduced in their pictures, always with minutest care, their own lives as they lived them day by day. Especially we learn to know the inside of their houses, for in those northern countries there was less out-of-door life than in the south, and people were more dependent for comfort and beauty on their indoor surroundings. Thus, they show us in their pictures how their rooms looked, and how the sun shone into them through their

## EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS

high windows, and how they loved to collect in them beautiful things—carvings and mirrors and hangings; and even when they painted the Virgin or the saints, they placed these holy people in rooms familiar to the painters, and did not seek to surround them with the gold and glitter of any far-off ideal country. This school of painting is called the Early Flemish, and it owes its fame to the genius of two brothers, Hubert and Jan van Eyck.

JAN VAN EYCK (*circa* 1390-1440).

Jan van Eyck came with his brother Hubert to Ghent somewhere about 1420, and there Hubert remained till his early death, painting many beautiful religious pictures, the most famous, the great altar-piece, "The Adoration of the Lamb," which you may see to this day in the Church of S. Bavon at Ghent, for which it was first designed. Jan helped his brother in this great work, and finished it after his death; but he early entered Court service, first under John of Bavaria, then as Court painter under the art-loving Philip the Good of Burgundy, with the title of "My lord's painter and varlet." In this way he often went on secret pilgrimages for his master, and once sailed in a Venetian galley as far as Lisbon, in order to negotiate a marriage between Philip and Isabel of Portugal. He painted a portrait of Isabel, and after a stay of nine months returned

## JAN VAN EYCK

home with the bride. He bought a house for himself in the rich town of Bruges, where he lived till his death.

The great discovery made by the two brothers is one which will make their names for ever renowned. They were interested in alchemy and the art of distilling substances, and in this way they first discovered a varnish which, applied to their pictures in tempera, made their colours more brilliant and lasting. But still more wonderful was their second discovery, that colours mixed better with oil than with the white of egg. This secret, which transformed the whole art of painting, Jan guarded jealously for years, though artists flocked from all parts of the world to see his work and to find out his method. Yet before his death, he told it to an Italian painter, who carried the knowledge of it south to Venice.

We do not know certainly how much of "The Adoration of the Lamb" was Hubert's work; but Jan must have painted the charming landscape in which the scene is placed, because he alone of the two had, on his journeys south, seen the cypress, the olive, and the palm trees which adorn it.

But we possess three pictures, signed and dated by him, in the National Gallery. Two are portraits of men. The first, dated 1432, is less well preserved than the two later ones, and is, indeed, the earliest of all his signed works. The sitter's name is given



## EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS

in Greek characters, Tymotheos, or Timothy, but the picture is called "Leal Souvenir," words which also form part of the inscription on the pedestal in front of the picture. It represents a thin-faced, intelligent man in a furred robe and a green chaperon, or hood. In the next year, 1433, he painted our second portrait, which has been far better preserved. This is a man of sixty or thereabouts, and is marvellous for the realism of the likeness and the delicacy of the painting. Round the man's head is a thick handkerchief elaborately folded, turban-fashion. The third picture is in a state of perfect preservation, and is his masterpiece. It represents Jean Arnolfini and his wife Jeanne de Chenany, standing facing each other in a bedroom richly furnished and full of fascinating detail. The husband is prim in black and chocolate colour; the wife wears a rich full robe of myrtle colour, trimmed with ermine. The folds of her drapery are a little stiff and wanting in delicacy, but the little frilled handkerchief on her curiously arranged hair is quite perfect in texture. You must notice the little convex mirror, on the frame of which are painted ten tiny pictures—ten events from the Passion of our Lord. Above the mirror is the date, 1434. In the glass you see the reflection of four figures, the married pair themselves, and the painter and his wife, introduced, we suppose, because van Eyck had married the sister of Jeanne Arnolfini. The fine brass-work of the chan-



POETAIL DU JEAN ARNOULLET.

*Ueber die Geschichte der Poetie, 1788, (in der K. Bayer. Landesbibliothek, München, 1788).*



## JAN VAN EYCK

delier is admirably given ; in one socket a candle is burning. Every detail in the picture is delightful, even down to the little griffon terrier in the foreground, and the soft, deep colours are as perfect now as on the day they were painted. The later story of this picture is very curious. It is said that the sister of Charles V., Mary, Governess of the Netherlands, accepted it as a gift from her barber-surgeon ; and in 1815 it was found by an Englishman, General Hay, in the lodgings in Brussels where he was recovering from his wounds after the Battle of Waterloo.

In our illustration you will see another portrait of Jean Arnolfini, which is now in Berlin. This time he is alone, but he is still wearing a fine fur-lined coat, though instead of the broad-brimmed hat of our picture in London, he has a scarlet handkerchief twisted in formal folds round his sedate, melancholy face.

If you ever go to Frankfort-on-the-Maine you will see in the Museum there a charming "Virgin and Child" by Jan van Eyck. The Virgin is seated on a dais in a comfortable room, but her chair is throne-like and her attitude full of majesty. She is feeding her Divine Child, who is no lovely Italian Bambino, but a rather wooden little creature. The Flemish masters, I expect, rarely saw their babies except tightly swathed in swaddling-bands. This picture shows one of van Eyck's characteristics—the little sharp angles which he introduces into the

## EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS

folds of his draperies, copied probably from the works of the sculptors in wood, which he would know well from the churches they had decorated. You will notice also that the hands of both his men and women are exceedingly long and narrow. He liked to paint figures on a very small scale, but always with perfect clearness and accuracy.

For quite four hundred years after their death the work of the two van Eycks was entirely neglected, and when we think of the stormy times through which the people of the Netherlands had to pass before they achieved their freedom, we can only be thankful that so much of this beautiful period of art still remains for us to enjoy.

### MEMLING (1430-1490).

Hans Memling, though he worked in the Netherlands, was really of German parentage, born at Mayence. We do not know who was his master, nor much about his life, except that he was a wild youth, who ran away from home and became a common soldier. He was wounded in the wars, and came, aged then about thirty, to be nursed by the good Sisters of the Hospital of S. John at Bruges. During his recovery he passed his time in drawing pictures and practising painting, in which he succeeded so well that he afterwards painted, as a thank-offering for the Sisters, the Shrine of S. Ursula,

## MEMLING

a wonderful piece of work, which is still preserved in the Hospital of S. John at Bruges. He tells the same story that Carpaccio, you will remember, illustrated not many years later in Venice, only here the story is painted on the four sides of a shrine which contains the relics of the Saint herself. The beauty of Memling's pure, bright colouring is very great; the Virgins have soft, lovely little faces, and the men-at-arms in the scene of S. Ursula's martyrdom handle their swords and strongbows with great precision. Memling knew just how they would do it; he had seen them on many a battle-field. The Convent nearly lost its marvellous Shrine when the French soldiers entered Bruges at the time of the French Revolution. It was only saved by the nuns' ignorance of the French language, which made them really unable to recognize the treasure for which their rough enemies were so energetically shouting.

We have a "Virgin and Infant Christ" by Memling in the National Gallery, a brilliant piece of work, painted on a panel. The Virgin, with her high forehead and wavy hair, sits under a crimson canopy; behind her is a curtain of rich brocade. The Child Jesus has His little hand on the open page of her missal, but He is turning aside to listen to the winning little Angel, who, kneeling, is playing to Him on a lute. In the front of the picture the donor kneels in robes of peace, but wearing his sword.



## EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS

Behind him stands S. George, bareheaded, though in armour of steel; the grisly dragon lies at his feet. In the background is a walled garden with grass-plots, and a distant view of a river-mouth on which a sailing-vessel and fishing-boats are visible.

Our illustration shows us the portrait of an old man, now in Cologne. It is an excellent example of Memling's painstaking, truthful work; you see every furrow on the sitter's brow, the red rims to his aged eyes, the hairs on his stubbly chin, the wrinkles on his quiet, folded hands. But these details are not unduly insisted upon; nor does he for a moment allow you to lose sight of the true object of every good portrait, the delineation of the sitter's character, and, especially in the faces of the old, the result of that character on the expression of the face.

Memling painted, as I have said, many altarpieces and religious works, always in the same pure, devout spirit. He has been called the Fra Angelico of Flanders. If you remember what you have read of the Florentine's work you will see that the resemblance is one of spirit, and not of execution. With regard to his method of painting, he was undoubtedly helped by the discoveries and by the pictures of the van Eycks, who had founded a school, and whose pupils were carrying on their traditions; but Memling had an originality of his own, and in his turn held high the torch of knowledge, ready to light those who came after him.



PORTRAIT OF ANDRÉ MAX

*After the painting by Hans Memling, now in the Oppenheim Collection, London*



## CHAPTER II

BREUGHEL (d. 1625).

BREUGHEL was a Flemish artist, born forty years after the death of Memling, and nicknamed "Peasant Breughel." You may easily distinguish him from the artists of all other countries, because he first painted peasant life for its own sake, drawing wide landscapes from his own out-of-door sketches, and setting in them scenes enacted by very small figures. He was born in a Flemish village, and his parents were humble village-folk. Thus he knew peasant ways from childhood: he had watched them walking in their fields, dancing at their feasts; he knew how the seasons passed in quiet country places, and, above all, he had been inspired by the surpassing beauty of the country in winter, when the snow lies in unbroken whiteness over the meadow-lands, and the delicate tracery of the bared trees is black against the cold grey of the skies. Our illustration shows one of these scenes, and is the most perfect example of his work. The picture is now in Vienna, and nowhere is the poetry of the snow-clad world more exquisitely shown. On the frozen ponds the skaters exercise their skill; in front of the inn-door the

## EARLY FLEMISH PAINTERS

hunters start for the chase, followed by their eager, snuffling dogs ; the brambles in the foreground lift long tendrils with their few withered leaves ; the hungry birds chatter in the trees ; behind are the distant hills with their snowy tops.

Another of his pictures, "The Peasant Wedding," is now in Vienna ; the figures here are on a larger scale than in our illustration. They cross the scene in a merry procession of mock solemnity with the musicians ; all is fun and gaiety, represented with perfect naturalness, yet so freshly, that it at once arrests our attention and strikes our imagination.

Sometimes Breughel painted larger pictures, "just for fun," as it seems to us. An example of this kind is at Naples, illustrating the text from S. Matthew : "If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?" The poor blind fellows are groping their way, six of them, in single file, across a flat, dull meadow. They hold on to one another by the shoulder or with their sticks ; the leader has just fallen on his back into a ditch full of water.

The whole work of Breughel shows an originality and power of imagination that give him a place quite by himself at the time in which he lived. Later on, there were many masters who cared to paint the same sort of subjects, yet never quite in his fashion. He stands alone, and for that reason I want you to remember him and to notice carefully



WINTER LANDSCAPE WITH HUNSMEN.

(After the picture by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in the Imperial Museum, Vienna.)





## BREUGHEL

the few pictures by him which still exist. He is, in this isolated position, a connecting-link between the earlier Flemish artists who conscientiously painted pictures of realistic simplicity, and Rubens, who, coming a generation later, painted his fine romantic compositions with so much breadth.

Breughel is the incarnation of Flemish art, freed from the conventions of its earlier masters and untouched by any outside influence. He cut himself loose from the teaching of any schools, and no better motto can be found for his work than the words he proudly wrote under each one of the many sketches, preserved in collections all over Europe—"from life."

His son, Peter Breughel, was a painter too, and carried on his father's ideas so faithfully it is often uncertain by which of the two a picture was painted. The younger man is well represented at Antwerp, where you will especially see "The Adoration of the Magi" and "The Massacre of the Innocents," two winter scenes, placing these sacred events in the setting of a small Flemish village, with every circumstance of its daily life accurately represented.



## PART III

# THE GERMAN PAINTERS

THE German art of this period was distinguished for its fine drawing, its stern love of truth, and its power of invention, by which it presented in a fresh, interesting way well-known scenes from sacred or allegorical subjects. The Germans had always a strong love of the fantastic, and they chose such themes as best gave scope to this side of their art. Thus you see frequently illustrations by them of the mystical scenes in the Book of the Revelation, or they would paint a series of pictures, showing in a grim procession the "Dance of Death," a favourite subject in the later Middle Ages. The painters found few patrons among the great people in their country, for there was nothing like general education, and neither the nobles nor the burghers had learnt to care for beauty in art, or to think about the decoration of their houses. Albrecht Dürer, it is true, received commissions for work from various German Princes, but the great Holbein had to leave his country and seek prosperity in England. In the meantime, more serious for the painters than

## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

this lack of sympathy in high quarters, the Reformation had spread through the greater part of the country, and the Church no longer called for a constant supply of religious pictures to hang over its altars and adorn its chapels. In the towns still remaining faithful to Rome, and in the few wealthy houses where pictures were bought, people preferred to acquire copies from the work of Italian masters, or pictures by native artists conceived in the same familiar manner. It was, as you see, an unfavourable soil, but none the less German art flourished and grew into a plant of amazing healthiness, as you will hear.

## CHAPTER I

ALBRECHT DÜRER (1471-1528).

ABOUT twenty years before Memling's death, there was born in the city of Nüremberg the painter Albrecht Dürer. He was the third child of the goldsmith Dürer, who had in all eighteen children, and had travelled from his native Hungary to settle in Germany, in that Nüremberg which you will find to-day looking, with its gabled houses and quaint, narrow streets, much as it must have looked to the small Albrecht so many years ago. He was a good son; from the two beautiful portraits which he painted of the old man, we see in what high honour he held his father, and he was often heard to regret that of his mother he only made one drawing shortly before her death. At first Dürer followed his father's craft, but he was soon allowed to apprentice himself to an artist of the town. Then followed what the Germans call "Wanderjahre," or years of travel for purposes of study. These were fruitful years for Dürer, and when he came home he was able to set up in a house and with a wife of his own. This wife, Agnes Frey, was, however, a disagreeable, shrewish woman, pious,



## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

narrow, and grasping. She urged him to work hard for the sake of the money, and, according to one of his friends, shortened his life by this perpetual overworking of him. For work he did, early and late, taking advantage of the newly invented art of printing, which included the art of reproducing illustrations to books by the help of woodcuts. This method of making money pleased the cupidity of Dürer's wife, for it was a quick process; he had only to draw what his fertile brain suggested upon wood, and then the wood-carvers cut his blocks for him, and the printers printed them, and at once there was a picture fit for a book, or, as it was usually of some sacred subject, ready to be sold at the church-door. He made a set of illustrations, too, of the Book of the Revelation, which he chose because the beasts and mythical personages gave free play to his love of drawing strange, fantastic objects. For his work leads you into a wild, strange fairy-land, a world of great, dark, romantic forests, such as he would have seen on his travels in South Germany; through them stray a marvellous company—Kings and Princesses, knights in armour, goblins, dogs and horses, stags and dragons. Peasants he shows you, too, going soberly to market, or dancing with rustic violence at a fair, or leaning against a tree and playing the bagpipes. Such sights, and others more charming still, he shows us in his woodcuts and engravings, courtyards of great

## ALBRECHT DÜRER

farmhouses, with wonderful wells for drawing water, and medieval towns, their fortifications and turrets fantastically piled, covering a hillside. He drew whole sets of illustrations for the Life of the Virgin and for the Passion of our Lord. One of them is called "The Green Passion," because the drawings were made on green paper. The three best known, perhaps, of his copper engravings are his "S. Eustace," his "Melancholia," and his "Knight, Death, and the Devil." In the first, the good knight has dismounted from his horse, and kneels devoutly to the stag, bearing the Crucifix on its antlers. In the distance a delightful castle crowns a wooded hill. Melancholia is a winged woman who sits lost in heavy, brooding thought, though surrounded by all the symbols of various human activities, the mason's and carpenter's tools, the architect's compass, the mathematician's table of numbers. The Knight with his grisly companions rides through a rock-strewn forest; Death bears his hour-glass; and the horned Devil his pitchfork. On a peak in the distance we get a glimpse of another little fortified town, charmingly indicated. Dürer knew such scenery well from his travels in the Tyrol, and if you compare his landscapes with those of Memling, you will see how far less real are Memling's mountains, for he at best knew only the vine-clad hills around his native town.

Dürer went twice to Venice; the second time he

## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

borrowed the money for the journey from a friend in Nüremberg, to whom he wrote ten letters, relating all the events of his life in Venice. He found Giovanni Bellini "very old, and to this day the best of all, as far as painting goes." Bellini liked Dürer's work too, we learn, and praised him "openly and highly in the presence of noblemen." Dürer got a commission from the German merchants living in Venice to paint an altar-piece. He writes a letter about it, full of fun and cheerfulness. "My picture sends greeting, and would give a ducat to be seen by you. My French cloak sends its best regards, and so does my Italian cloak." In his last letter, he laments leaving Venice: "Oh, how I shall starve for lack of this sun! here I am a gentleman!" he cries, referring to the superior position held by painters in art-loving Venice, so different from the scanty recognition bestowed on them in Germany.

Dürer has left many portraits of great excellence, besides those I have mentioned of his own family. The portrait of himself at the age of twenty-nine, with the curiously curled hair, now at Munich, is well known; less familiar is one he painted of himself rather earlier, which is now in Madrid. He wears a boldly striped cap over his flowing curls, and through an open window a river and snow-topped mountains are visible. In Madrid, too, is a fine portrait by him of a man in the prime of life,



PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN.  
*(From the painting by Albrecht Dürer at Vienna.)*



## ALBRECHT DÜRER

strong-willed and a little frowning. He wears a velvet coat with a great fur collar, and a broad black velvet hat, well planted on his short and curling hair. Our illustration is from the portrait of the Emperor Maximilian. A drawing exists for this portrait, on which Dürer has written, "This is Emperor Maximilian, him have I, Albrecht Dürer, portrayed at Augsburg up in his little room in the castle, in the year 1518, on Monday after S. John the Baptist's Day." To the right of the picture, just below the peak of the Emperor's hat, is the painter's characteristic signature, the large A with the D inside; this you will see on all his engravings, sometimes in the most ingenious places, as, for example, in a Nativity, where, at the top of an immensely tall house, from a gable, a little sign-board swings, bearing signature and date upon it. The Emperor is represented with an open pomegranate in his hand; he wears a fur-lined coat with a deep-hanging collar, and on his cap is a medal of the Virgin and Child, such as people frequently wore in those days. It is a wonderful portrait of a proud ruler, experienced and keen in judgment, with grey hair, critical eyes, and thin, firm lips. But under that kingly presence Maximilian is said to have had a genial disposition, and to have adored all manly sports; his people called him "the first knight of his age." He was fifty-nine at the time this portrait was made, and he died the next year,



## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

1519. He was succeeded by Charles V., Titian's patron. When on his travels in 1520, Dürer saw the coronation of the new Emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle. It was on this same journey that he went to see the famous van Eyck altar-piece at Ghent; he praised it heartily, but did not forget to make a note of the fact that he saw in the same town some lions at a show which interested him exceedingly.

This was the time that Luther's teaching was tearing the religious world asunder. Dürer never renounced Catholicism, but he was deeply interested in the new tenets, and the last years of his life were given up to controversies on the subject. When he died in 1528, in the house in Nuremberg which is still piously preserved to his honour, there was a great outburst of grief throughout Germany. In Italy, too, his name was revered. Raphael had exchanged pictures with him, and it is recorded that he said of him: "Indeed, Dürer would surpass us all if he, like us, were to have continually the works of the old masters before him." But we cannot join in this regret: Dürer stands by himself; his mysterious pictures stir our imaginations; their fantastic, tender details charm us in much the same way as the old German fairy-stories and legends. The work he has left behind in such quantities can hold its own against the work of the greatest of the world's artists, and need not fear by the comparison.

## CRANACH

CRANACH (1472-1553).

If Dürer was the painter of a Catholicism at war within her own borders, Cranach may be called the painter of the Reformation. He was a close friend of Luther, whose portrait, together with that of the reformer Melancthon and of himself, he introduced into his "Crucifixion" in the parish church at Weimar. After Dürer, Cranach is certainly the best-known artist of his time in Germany. He painted charming pictures in peculiarly clear colours and with great imaginative skill. We have now in the National Gallery, recently presented by Lady Carlisle, a very good example of his delightful manner, a figure of Charity, a naked woman holding a little child in her arms, while another plays with a quaintly dressed doll at her feet. In the same style is a "Venus and Cupid" in the Gallery at Munich. The delicate gold hair of the goddess, her gold necklace, and the gold band round her waist are marvels of ornamental work; the tiny winged Cupid is mounted on a box to make him tall enough almost to reach his mother's down-stretched fingertip. Black, white, gold, grey are the harmonies of this delicious composition, and, standing out from their background of dead black, the figures are full of an airy charm and lightness. On many of his pictures you may see his artist's mark, a black snake, with two black bat's wings, a red coronet,

## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

and, in the snake's mouth, a golden ring with a ruby in it, the arms given to Cranach by the Electors of Saxony, under three of whom he held office as Court painter. He was sent by one of them to Dürer's patron, the Emperor Maximilian, and painted for him little Prince Charles, afterwards Charles V., then aged eight years.

Later in his life Cranach settled in Wittenberg, where he bought an apothecary's shop and a licence for selling sweet wines. He kept a printing- and a book-shop too, and a studio for apprentices, which was, in fact, almost a picture-factory, and there he made sketches and designs for his pupils to copy.

Titian, you may remember, painted a picture of Charles V. at the Battle of Mühlberg: it was at that battle that Cranach's patron, the Elector of Saxony, was taken prisoner and carried to Innsbrück. The painter shared his master's captivity, which lasted five years, and when the Elector was at last set free, he took this faithful friend back with him to his Court at Weimar, where Cranach died in 1554.

There has lately been exhibited in London a "Melancholia," by Cranach, from a private collection. It is interesting to compare it with Dürer's picture on the same subject. Cranach's Melancholy is a younger woman, without the fairy grace of his Venus, but with a curious charm in her round, discontented face. She sits, in her light red dress, with brooding eyes, self-absorbed and regardless of the

## CRANACH

world around. She whittles a stick, while little Cupids play unheeded with a dog at her feet, and the wine stands untouched on the table. To the left a cloud of curious creatures float upwards, a real witches' Sabbath of hobgoblins and demons, and banners ornamented with frogs and eels. It is dated 1528 and bears Cranach's device, the black-winged serpent.

You will see pictures by Cranach in many museums and galleries all over Europe, and they will never fail to interest you, because of the fresh manner, full of poetry and charm, with which he treats familiar subjects from sacred or legendary lore.

## CHAPTER II

HOLBEIN (1497-1543).

HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER, sometimes called the "inscrutable painter," was the son of a man, himself a well-known painter, and was born at the imperial city of Augsburg. He was taught the beginnings of his art by his father, but he went early to Basel, intending to earn his living there by drawing for the booksellers of that town, already famous for their printing of illustrated books. Basel, picturesque on the swift-flowing Rhine, is still proud of the great artist, who for thirteen years worked within its walls, and when you go there one day on your way to the Swiss mountains, you must go to see his drawings, religiously guarded in the town museum. Holbein did a great deal of work during those early years at Basel; he painted portraits, decorated houses and the doors of organ-lofts, made altar-pieces, and painted frescoes for the town hall. But the piece of work which changed the whole current of his life was the portrait he painted there of the great scholar Erasmus, who was staying at the house of his friend Froben, the printer. Erasmus was a Dutchman, whose name is a classical rendering of

## HOLBEIN

“The Beloved One”; he was at this time Professor of Divinity and Greek to the University of Cambridge, and did more than any other man to advance the revival of learning throughout Europe. He worked ardently for the reform of theology, and he was a sincere lover of the arts. His portrait pleased him so well that he sent it to his friend, Sir Thomas More, upon which he received a letter from England: “Your painter, my dear Erasmus, is an admirable artist,” and in due time Holbein was invited to Sir Thomas’s famous house at Chelsea. There he stayed happily, painting portraits of his host, his family, and his friends. More’s friends were, as you may suppose, men known to fame. And amongst these portraits you find the Treasurer of England, Sir Bryan Tuke; the Archbishop of Canterbury, Wareham; the Astronomer Royal, Nicholas Kratzer; to name only a few of them. Unfortunately the original of Sir Thomas More and his family has been lost, but in the museum at Basel there is a sketch made for it, probably given to Erasmus. All this time Holbein’s work had been kept a secret from the King, More’s master, who would not have scrupled to have secured the painter’s time for his own use alone. When, however, after about three years’ time the King was invited to Chelsea to view the pictures, Henry VIII. expressed his royal pleasure in them, forgave his Chancellor his secrecy, and at once engaged the artist to paint



## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

his portrait and those of his children. One portrait of the King was painted for the Company of Barber-Surgeons, with the Master of the Company kneeling at his feet, petitioning for the royal licence in a tapestry-hung room of the palace. The picture is finished with delicate elaboration; you see the well-trimmed beards of the members of the Company, their flowered and embroidered robes, their jewelled fingers and chains of gold. Many years later, in 1668, after the Great Fire, Pepys, in his Diary, writes: "After dinner to Chyrurgeons' Hall to see their great picture of Holbein's, thinking to have bought it for a little money. I did think to give £200 for it, it being worth £1,000; but it is so spoiled that I have no mind to it, and is not a pleasant, though a good, picture." Luckily Pepys' plan fell through and the picture hangs in their hall to this day.

In the National Gallery we now have two pictures by Holbein, both purchased within recent years, although England is richer in his portraits than any other country, and possesses upwards of seventy in various private collections. The first purchased is signed and dated, 1533. It is called "The Ambassadors," and shows two gentlemen of the period standing on a floor paved with marble and mosaic and arranged in geometrical patterns. Both men have a solid, mature look, though their ages, given in the picture itself, are only twenty-nine and twenty-

## HOLBEIN

five respectively. One wears the order of S. Michael, but it is not known for certain whom they represent. From a manuscript found not long ago in France, it is, however, possible that they were two Frenchmen—the one, Jean de Dinteville, Ambassador from the Court of François I. to that of Henry VIII., in the years 1532 and 1533; the other George de Selve, Ambassador to the Emperor Charles V. All around them lie mathematical instruments; there is also a globe and a lute. Most curious of all, and proof of Holbein's skill in perspective, is an elongated image of a skull, stretched out in front of them.

The second picture, acquired not long ago by the National Gallery, is connected with one of the King's many attempts at marriage. Before I tell you about it, it must be recorded that when his marriage with Anne Boleyn was celebrated with great pomp, the Company of German Merchants in England, in honour of her coronation, commissioned Holbein to paint two large pictures, "The Triumph of Riches" and "The Triumph of Poverty," for their banqueting-hall. The grouping of these processional pictures, as seen from his designs, reminds us of the "Triumphs" of Mantegna, but the figures, less statuesque and romantic, have more of the roundness and charm of Raphael. After Jane Seymour's death in 1537, Holbein was sent with the English Ambassador by the King to Brussels, to paint the

## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

portrait of Christina, the sixteen-year-old widow of the Duke of Milan, as Henry wished to marry her if her face pleased him. Christina could only spare Holbein three hours for the sitting, but our second picture in the National Gallery is based on that sketch, and shows, as you see from the illustration, the tall handsome girl in her demure widow's hood, wearing her richly furred robes with fine effect in all the pride of her firm, young dignity. She pleased the Ambassador by her "honest countenance and her few words, wisely spoken," but her own inclination towards the marriage seemed very uncertain. All that she would say was: "You know I am the Emperor's poor servant, and must follow his pleasure." She was, in fact, niece to the great Emperor Charles V., who absolutely refused his consent to the marriage, so Holbein went to the Court of a very different lady, Anne of Cleves, and Henry missed the opportunity of mating with his peer. You may see Holbein's portrait of the Duchess, Anne of Cleves, in the Louvre.

Henry VIII. knew how to appreciate the art of his painters. A good story is told of the manner in which he treated the complaints of one of his noblemen, who had been roughly handled by Holbein when he one day tried to force his way into the studio. The King refused to blame his painter. "Do you think," he said to the Earl, "that I care so little for the man? I tell you, I can make seven

## HOLBEIN

earls out of seven peasants if it so please me, but out of seven earls not a single Holbein."

Holbein did not paint only portraits for his master. We are told how Inigo Jones, the great architect, once showed a German guest a book in the King's cabinet quite full of drawings, which Holbein had prepared for the King, with designs for all manner of poniards and trinkets; sword-chains and belts, buttons for the royal mantle, buckles for his shoes, and covers for his books; spoons and forks, knife-handles, salt-cellars, and drinking-vessels. Nothing was too small to be enriched and dignified by his noble art.

In his young days at Basel Holbein had painted a famous "Dance of Death," in which he showed with terrible irony how Death the Conqueror comes at last to each one of us, from the King and the Emperor down to the beggar at the gate. It is a grotesque and grisly dance, quite unlike the calm grandeur of Dürer's Knight riding serenely with Death and the Devil. It is curious to note that Holbein was himself suddenly snatched away by death in his most horrible shape. He died in London of the plague, and his body was cast into a common grave, as had to be done in cases of that terrible sickness. "He left this frail world," we are told, "in which everything is but ephemeral," and no one, in spite of much searching, could discover in which church he was buried. "But," adds the

## THE GERMAN PAINTERS

chronicler, "a noble and praiseworthy monument has been erected to his memory in the living gratitude of all lovers of art, which will continue longer than marble; the praise of which will go on growing, like the evergreen laurel, down to unthinkable ages."

## PART IV

# LATER FLEMISH PAINTERS

### CHAPTER I

JUST as the seventeenth century was beginning a great political change took place in the Spanish Netherlands, which correspond roughly to Flanders, or our modern Belgium. The yoke of Spain was thrown off, and the Archduke Albert and his wife, Isabel, reigned over what was, to all practical purposes, an independent state. They were lovers and generous patrons of the arts, and they welcomed especially painters to their Court, giving them full scope for their abilities in designing pageants, painting portraits, and decorative pictures for their palaces.

The list of well-known painters who must be included in this school is not a long one. Antonius Mor (1519-1576) was born in Utrecht, but he lived mostly in Antwerp. He went to England for a time, and was patronized by Queen Mary. You may see a "Portrait of a Man" by him in the National



## LATER FLEMISH PAINTERS

Gallery, showing a fine, middle-aged face, strong and thoughtful, set in the frilled ruff of the period.

Within a year of Mor's death was born the second painter of this group, the great Rubens; twenty years later came Van Dyck.

### RUBENS (1577-1640).

Peter Paul Rubens was born on June 29, 1577, on the day of those Saints whose two names he bears. He was a typical Fleming, and at the time when he lived the citizens of Antwerp were, in their wealth and pride, not unlike the Venetians, among whom Veronese lived and painted. Indeed, in the power and splendour of his work Rubens has been compared to Veronese, although the Northern Master is incomparably the greater. Like Veronese, Rubens produces almost magical effects of colour, and the far, misty distances of his low-lying native country may be compared with the soft skies of water-surrounded Venice. Rubens, too, was full of the pride of life: he saw the world as a gorgeous pageant, in which, as the poet-artist Blake said: "Exuberance is Beauty." To the eyes of his imagination the heavens stood open, but it was a great, wide, earthly Paradise, full of life and colour, and warm, human charm; and, whether he painted saints or goddesses, martyrs or Roman matrons, it

## RUBENS

is as large, beautiful men and women that they live for us on his crowded canvases.

Rubens' father was a Calvinist, and as a member of the Reformed faith, he had to leave his native town, Catholic Antwerp, where he had been a noted lawyer. He travelled with his family to Germany, and his fourth son, the painter, was born in a little village in Westphalia. After the father's death the mother returned with her children to Antwerp, which was still under the strictly Catholic rule of the Spaniards. The boys were in consequence brought up as Catholics, and were educated at the Jesuit College there; nor did Peter Paul ever return to the faith for which his father had sacrificed so much. He was sent, while still a boy, to Brussels, as page in a noble family, and, though the life was distasteful to him, it gave him an early acquaintance with the world and its customs, which was of great use to him in his later life. He was next apprenticed in a painter's studio, and worked so well that, soon after the age of twenty, he was admitted to the Guild of Painters at Antwerp.

Then came his years of wandering, and he travelled in Italy till the work of the great masters he studied there became part of his very life. In Venice he came under the spell of Titian and Veronese; in Florence he admired the immortal Michelangelo; everywhere he was well received, for he was a man of handsome, stately presence,

## LATER FLEMISH PAINTERS

with courtly manners, intelligent and well educated, a good Latin scholar, thanks to the Jesuit fathers, and speaking with equal fluency Italian, English, German, and Dutch. During these seven years Rubens was appointed Court painter to the Duke of Mantua, and, like Titian before him, was sent on diplomatic journeys by his master. He once went to Spain, bearing presents to King Philip III. of copies of famous Italian pictures; horses, too, were in his train, gifts from the Duke's own stables. Rubens loved to paint horses, and you will see later how much he had studied them, and how magnificently he could paint them.

Rubens was recalled to Antwerp by the news of his mother's illness, and, to his great grief, arrived home a week after her death. He would have liked to have gone back to Italy, but his own Archduke, Albert, Governor of the Netherlands, claimed his services, and he became Court painter with a fine salary. This determined him to settle in Antwerp, where he built a princely house in the Italian style, surrounded by stately gardens. There is a picture by him which may well be of this very house. He has painted it in the summer-time, standing fair and dignified to the left of the picture; on the right is the garden with its trees, and he is leading his wife in knightly fashion by the hand across the court that lies between. In clearing the ground for the foundations of his house he trespassed upon land



THE GIRL OF THE YEAR

*After the painting by P. P. Rubens, now in the National Gallery, London.*



## RUBENS

belonging to the Company of the Arquebusiers, who threatened him with a law-suit. This was averted by Rubens, who cleverly suggested that he should paint the offended citizens a picture for the Chapel of their Guild, as compensation. This was accepted, and the famous "Descent from the Cross," still the glory of Antwerp, is the result.

Rubens married twice, and he painted both wives so often, we seem to know them well. His first wife was Isabella Brant, a handsome woman, whom we see in one of his pictures sitting by him in a stiff ruff and a tall, steeple-crowned hat, a sweet, sensible expression on her quiet face. Much later, when he was nearly fifty-three, he married a young girl, Helena Fourment, a lovely young woman, of what we now call "the real Rubens' type"; wonderfully fair, with wide blue eyes, soft, round, and long-limbed in person. We see her charmingly painted in the gallery at Munich, her little boy on her knee, a delicious, naked baby-boy, wearing nothing but a gallant plumed hat on his fair little head.

Besides his town-house Rubens had a country-house, the Château de Steen, near Mechlin. You see this château and the surrounding stretch of country in a picture, one of a series illustrating the four seasons, which Rubens painted. It is in the National Gallery, and represents Autumn, as you may recognize from the sportsman in the foreground, lurking with his flint-lock, about to shoot



## LATER FLEMISH PAINTERS

the sitting partridge. Wordsworth knew this picture well ; in his day it belonged to his friend, Sir George Beaumont. The poet writes one day, praising the art with which Rubens "has brought, as it were, a whole country into one landscape, and made the most formal partitions of cultivation, hedgerows of pollard willows, conduct the eye into the depths of his picture, and thus has given it that appearance of immensity which is so striking." Sir George left his picture to the National Gallery, where you may still see it. "Spring" is in the Wallace collection at Hertford House, with the rainbow which gives it its name. "Summer" and "Winter" belong to the King, and are at Windsor.

Rubens was not idle in his country-house ; he studied the lovely effects of nature around him for future works, and even found time to paint at least two large canvases. We know, for example, that it was there that he painted the great altar-piece, "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," for the Guild of Fishmongers at Mechlin near by, where it hangs in the Church of Notre-Dame to this day.

In the country he lived very simply ; rising early, he first heard Mass, and then painted, while someone read aloud to him from one of his favourite books, Livy, Plutarch, Cicero, or Seneca. He stopped work at eleven and looked at his art-treasures till twelve, when he dined. Then he worked again till between five and six, when he

## RUBENS

rode out on one of his fine Spanish horses, returning home in time for supper.

Rubens was not, however, allowed to lead this quiet, regular life without interruption; sometimes he left home for long periods: once, for example, he was sent for by Marie de Médicis, the widowed Queen of Henri IV. of France, to paint a series of pictures, twenty-one in number, commemorating the principal events in her life, beginning from her birth. These decorative works are now hung in one long gallery at the Louvre, and can there be enjoyed as they were intended to be; for they are not isolated pictures, but a set of splendid designs, meant to cover large wall-spaces, in the manner of tapestries.

While he was in Paris, Rubens became acquainted with the Duke of Buckingham, a great lover of art, and the wealthiest nobleman in England. After Rubens' return to Antwerp, Buckingham visited him and so much admired the artist's great collection of paintings and sculpture, that Rubens consented, rather unwillingly, to sell them for a very great sum. In 1630 the painter went himself to England, charged as Ambassador with negotiations for a peace with Spain. He gave the King, Charles I., a picture by his own hand, appropriately called, "The Blessings of Peace," which is now in the National Gallery. In the middle, "Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles," while at her feet, the great god Pan offers

## LATER FLEMISH PAINTERS

her "the kindly fruits of the earth," and a big harmless leopard, his claws playfully unsheathed, rolls his furry length. Two nymphs attend great Pan: Wealth, her lovely back to us, is about to scatter jewels from a deep bowl, Joy sounds the timbrel. Opposite this group a sweet-faced girl kneels with two younger children. This little group, so tenderly painted, was, perhaps, from Rubens' own family; a delightful winged Cupid pulls grapes for them from Pan's store. In the distance Famine and Pestilence are seen withdrawing, and Minerva herself gently expels War, a fierce figure in armour of shining mail. In Cromwell's time this picture was sold for a hundred pounds, and was taken to Genoa, to the Palace of the Dorias. Luckily for us, the Marquis of Stafford bought it back for three thousand pounds, and gave it to the nation in 1825.

It was during this visit to England that Rubens designed, and partly carried out, the ceiling of the banqueting-hall in the Palace of Whitehall, representing the apotheosis of James I. The ceiling, though it has been largely restored, still exists, and you may see it in its original position in what is now the United Service Museum.

Our illustration is Rubens' famous "Chapeau de Paille," now called the "Chapeau de Poil." It is the picture of Rubens' sister-in-law, Susannah Lunden, painted while she was still Susannah

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Fourment. The story goes that when she was a girl of twenty she refused to sit to Rubens, but was one day caught by him unawares and painted in her garden, wearing a "straw hat." She forgave the painter his indiscretion, and accepted the picture. After her death Rubens begged it back from the family, and gave them instead the replica we now have, in which she wears a "beaver hat." The family kept the picture until 1822, when it was bought by Sir Robert Peel; fifty years later it became the property of the nation, and one of the gems of its gallery.

The National Gallery is rich in pictures by Rubens; especially fine is "The Judgment of Paris," where the Trojan shepherd sits, apple in hand, on the point of declaring Venus to be the most beautiful of the three goddesses. Juno has been rejected, her proud peacock at her feet; Minerva, too, whose owl looks out sleepily from the bushes beyond. The whole scene is full of rustic grace, the rough-haired sheep-dog, lying watchfully near his master, eyes distrustingly the peacock who stretches out his slender neck; the sheep graze quietly close by, and the distant landscape lies bathed in summer sunshine. Another picture in the same gallery is interesting, because it belonged to Rubens up to the time of his death, and stands in the inventory of his possessions as "Three cloathes pasted upon board, being the Triumph of Julius Cæsar, after Mantegna."

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You will remember that Mantegna painted his "Triumph" for the Duke of Mantua, and that it now hangs at Hampton Court. If you can compare these two pictures, you will see how widely the two painters differ in their conception of ancient Rome. Mantegna insists on its strength, as Shakespeare does in "Coriolanus"; Rubens thinks of its glory, and adds flaming candelabra, dishevelled maidens sounding cymbals, and elephants twisting their long trunks, trumpeting to the skies. His is a Rome of the Renaissance, filled with all that, pictorially, Rubens loved best in life.

Animals of all kinds he introduced gladly into his pictures; horses, as I have said, and dogs; stags, wild boars, and foxes; lions, too, and leopards, panthers and wolves. Children, "those innocent little animals of our daily life," he painted incomparably. In Munich there is a picture of seven small naked cherubs, staggering sturdily under the weight of a great festoon of fruit. We are told that he studied their baby graces from his own little boys, and just so round and fair and dimpled they may well have been.

Rubens died at the age of sixty-two, and was buried with immense pomp in his own parish church in Antwerp. There you may see the great altar-piece in honour of S. George, painted by him for a side-chapel; he has introduced into it his own portrait in the guise of the glittering soldier-saint,



## RUBENS

together with the portraits of all those he loved, his two wives, his children, and his sister-in-law, Susannah ; it is a wonderful masterpiece, inspiring those who look at it not perhaps with lofty aims or high resolves, but with a great desire for the grace of peaceful virtues and the happiness of calm, everyday affection, and goodwill.



## CHAPTER II

VAN DYCK (1599-1641).

ANTON VAN DYCK was the best known of all Rubens' pupils. He was born in Antwerp, and very early entered the master's studio. He, like Holbein, was recognized chiefly as a portrait-painter, and although a Fleming, it was in England that he worked the longest and painted some of his finest pictures. When we talk of the Cavalier gentlemen of the reign of Charles I., we think of Van Dyck's portraits and their melancholy, refined faces, and eyes that seem to foresee approaching disaster.

When Van Dyck was only nineteen, he was admitted into the Guild of Painters in Antwerp, and then he travelled, as his master had done before him, to Italy, where, thanks to Rubens' introductions, all doors were open to him. Everywhere he painted, copying Titian's pictures in Venice, and obtaining commissions for portraits there, in Rome, and in Genoa. In Genoa he stayed the longest, for his work was much sought after by the wealthy merchant-princes of that city, and when you go to Genoa, you will find many of the portraits still hanging on the palace walls for which they were

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painted. One of them, the picture of the "Marchesa Balbi," hangs now over one of the mantelpieces of Dorchester House in London; it is the beautiful portrait of a stately young woman with soft, kind, dark eyes. People say the charming young Flemish painter knew so well how to talk to his sitters, that even the shyest lost self-consciousness, and looked their best and comeliest in his presence.

Van Dyck was twice in England, before he settled there as Court painter to Charles I. in 1632. The King gave him two houses—a town-house in Blackfriars, and a country one at Eltham. There is a note found among the State papers of the period, headed, "Things to be done. . . . To speak with Inigo Jones concerning a house for Van Dike." Inigo Jones was, you remember, Court Architect to Charles I.

Van Dyck was now in a position to realize his dream of living sumptuously, and surrounding himself with fine friends and treasures of art, as he had seen Rubens do. We are told that he "always went magnificently dressed, kept a numerous and gallant equipage, and so good a table that few princes were more visited or better served." He worked hard, too, painting portraits for noble families all over England; but he lacked Rubens' sober good sense and underlying frugality; he often found himself in money difficulties and distressed his royal master by his dissipations. Charles wished him to marry,

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thinking that a wife would help him to live seriously, and through the King's influence, he married Mary Ruthven, Governess to the young Prince of Wales, the daughter of a noble Scotch family. But his habits of extravagance had a bad effect on Van Dyck's work ; he grew careless, undertook for the sake of gain more pictures than he could paint well, and left a great deal to his pupils.

After his marriage he travelled with his young wife for two years, and when he returned to England, he found what great misfortunes had overtaken the royal family of the Stuarts. Charles I. had fled to York, his wife was universally detested, trouble and confusion reigned. It was Van Dyck's death-blow ; he was only forty-two, but his health was weakened by overwork and wild living. He died in his wife's arms in his house at Blackfriars, and was buried in old S. Paul's, the church which a few years later perished in the Great Fire of London.

Our illustration is from one of Van Dyck's royal groups that still belongs to Charles II.'s descendant, the Duke of Richmond. Charles I. sits with all the royal grace the artist has taught us to love in him. Beside him is his Queen, Henrietta Maria, her small French face with its little, obstinate mouth, and her satin dress of the soft yellow colour that Van Dyck loved. Completing the group are the two royal children in the tight baby-caps of Stuart times, the pretty spaniel, of the King's

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favourite breed, at their feet. Behind, the proud pile of Windsor lies under threatening storm-clouds, which seem to us to symbolize an end that Van Dyck must have been far from anticipating. One of his most beautiful portraits of Charles is in the Louvre. The King is hunting, and has just dismounted from his horse, which is held by the Marquis of Hamilton, Master of the Horse. Some think the painting of this fine picture was influenced by Velasquez, the Spanish master, of whom you will hear later. Van Dyck had certainly seen his work. There is also an imposing picture of Charles in full armour on horseback at Windsor; and in the National Gallery is another, a stately picture, "by a Cavalier of a Cavalier." The King is sitting on his great charger, a sturdy beast, which has the look of a fine modern dray-horse. His equerry, Sir Thomas Morton, is on foot, carrying the King's helmet. The light falls on the royal armour of polished steel and on the King's sad, romantic face; he sits bare-headed, his hair long, just lifted by the breeze. The lovely landscape might have been painted by Titian. This picture belonged to Charles himself, and passed, after his execution, to Munich, where it was bought by the Great Duke of Marlborough. Fortunately, the nation has been able to buy it back.

One of Van Dyck's best portraits is in the National Gallery; it is said to be the picture that

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he always carried about with him in his early days as the proof of his capabilities. It represents a Flemish gentleman, Cornelius van der Geest, a lover of art and a good friend both to Rubens and to Van Dyck. The portrait gives an ideal head of a refined, elderly man of the world, whose eyes, in spite of their shrewd, kindly glance, seem to have known sorrow.

Venitia, the adventure-loving wife of Sir Kenelm Digby, Van Dyck knew well, and he painted her several times, for she was a lady of rare beauty. She died young and very suddenly, poisoned, some say, by her husband, who was fond of experimenting with drugs on the human body. Van Dyck has painted her on her death-bed: a faded rose lies beside her; on her lips is a tranquil smile.

Van Dyck is essentially the painter of Princes, and of Princes on the brink of ruin. Many of the beautiful youths and courtly gentlemen whom he painted perished in the Civil Wars, or lived on for long, miserable years in exile. You will be conscious of the same tragic charm when we consider the French pictures painted on the Eve of the Revolution: these people lived in halcyon days, and the storm was near at hand. Just such a gentleman of the period hangs in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He is James Stuart, Duke of Lennox, created Duke of Richmond by his cousin, King Charles, in the year of Van Dyck's death. He



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stands regally, one hand on his hip, the other, gloved, caresses the head of his great hound. He wears the Order of S. George on a blue ribbon and the brilliant star of the Saint Esprit adorns his short cloak. Fair hair curls round his pale, boyish face, but his steady glance shows his well-balanced mind. He impoverished himself for his royal master during the Civil War, and, after the execution of Charles, stood one of the few mourners who took part in the hurried funeral ceremony at Windsor. The Duke died before the brightening days of the Restoration.

Portrait-painting owes an immense debt to Van Dyck's genius, and his influence may be traced on all those who followed him. Before him come many good portrait-painters, it is true, and Van Dyck was always rather overshadowed by the towering figure of Rubens : his portraits have not the certainty of Holbein's, nor is he such a supreme master of his craft as Velasquez and Frans Hals : he cannot move us like Rembrandt by his mystery and depth, but he has a charm which he alone wields, and for which England must be for ever grateful.





## PART V

### DUTCH PAINTERS

ABOUT the same time that the Flemish Netherlands emancipated themselves from Spain, the Dutch United Provinces began their separate existence, and thus there opened out for the Dutch painters a new era. The United Provinces were a Republic, and no Court painters were needed to decorate their palaces with stories from the mythology, or paint members of the reigning family for presents to neighbouring Princes. This threw the painters back upon other subjects for their art. To adorn their own handsome rooms, the rich burghers preferred to buy pictures illustrating scenes from the life familiar to them, or landscapes of the bright outside world they loved. The Dutch character was home-keeping and self-contained: they knew nothing of the snowy Alpine peaks; they wanted their own frozen canals and rivers, lit up by their own red, winter sunshine. They had no taste for heathen gods and goddesses and stories of poetry and romance. They liked pictures of their own

## DUTCH PAINTERS

mild-eyed ladies clad in velvet and satin, playing at the harpsichord or singing to the lute; or, for gaiety and amusement, they liked scenes in village taverns, with drinking peasants or jolly wedding-feasts. All these things the Dutch artists learned to paint supremely well in those early, peaceful days of the new Republic.

This concentration on the facts of their own lives was due also, in part, to the new religion. As you have seen in Italy and in Germany in the pre-Reformation days, many painters worked almost exclusively for the churches, and there was an unfailing demand for altar-pieces, or sacred pictures for private oratories. The Reformed Church discouraged all such art, and the painters lavished their skill on small, everyday incidents, as Sir Joshua Reynolds very aptly puts it: "With the Dutch, a history-piece is properly a portrait of themselves; whether they describe the inside or outside of their houses, we have their own people engaged in their own peculiar occupations, working or drinking, playing or fighting."

The first Dutch painter whom we are to consider is Frans Hals, not a painter of such "Conversation" pictures as I have just spoken of, but a great portrait-painter, the greatest Holland has ever produced.

## CHAPTER I

FRANS HALS (1580-1666).

FRANS HALS belonged to a family associated for more than two centuries with the town of Haarlem in Holland. He was, however, born in Antwerp, where his father had migrated, perhaps because he had adhered to the unpopular Spanish party at the time of the Revolt of the United Provinces. Of his early life nothing has come down to us, and, as far as we know, we have no picture painted by him before the year 1616, the date of his "Banquet of the S. Joris Shooting Company." In all probability, he learned his art first in the studio of some Flemish master in Antwerp, returned to his ancestral town of Haarlem, and there worked in the studio of some Dutch master. However that may be, the silence that covers the first thirty-six years of the master's life is unbroken. Then suddenly Hals bursts upon us with this finished picture of one of the Volunteer companies, who, during the forty years' struggle of Holland against Spain, had proved their value as a means of national defence. Such guild pictures cannot have been easy to paint; just a group of solidly built, rather swaggering burghers, all dressed in the

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same bravery of ruffs and broad sashes, bearing the same tall pikes and heavy flags, all eating, it appears, the same food. Hals has painted five such pictures, and three smaller groups of hospital committee-members; one of these latter, composed of women only, their pale, keen faces and severe black dresses wonderfully arranged to give the impression of competent authority. All these pictures were apparently paid for by private subscription of the members, and thus everybody may well have had his personal opinion about the arrangement of the group. When all these difficulties are taken into consideration, you will better appreciate the astonishing success of the painter in his treatment of such material.

Hals painted another class of picture altogether in his fine half-length portraits of men. We know of several such canvases, among them "The Laughing Cavalier," the jovial gentleman, long-haired and beruffed, in the Hertford House collection. Another is in the National Gallery, painted by Hals when he was over fifty. It may be the portrait of the painter himself, for it shows us a cheerful, rollicking fellow, full of dash and devilry. The same gallery has lately bought a new picture by him, one of those large family portraits the Dutch loved to possess. In it Hals has painted the father and mother, sons and daughters, some almost grown up, some still little children. It is a stiff group, all black

## FRANS HALS

and white—black, for they all wear dresses of some sombre hue; white with the whiteness of their starched ruffs; but it is valuable as showing the burgher taste of the time, and as giving that sense of absolute likeness and reality of which Hals had in so high a measure the secret.

America possesses five pictures by him—two in Boston, and three in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. They are all portraits, except one of the New York set, "The Smoker," a group of peasant women laughing round a man who smokes a long clay pipe. In the same collection is the portrait of a woman, which was formerly supposed to represent the painter's wife. "The Smoker" is probably an early work of the master, as it is painted on an oak panel; later he always used canvas.

We are told many stories about Hals, not much to his credit. He was undoubtedly a rough fellow, fond of drink and low company. Once when Van Dyck was on his way to England, he stopped at Haarlem on purpose to see Hals, whose work was known to him. He did not find him in his studio, and even when the painter's servant had been sent to the inn to fetch his master, Van Dyck had to wait a long while before Hals came unwillingly home. The visitor pretended he had come to have his portrait painted, but, having only a couple of hours to wait, he begged Hals to be speedy. At



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this, we are told, "he got to work like a soldier assaulting a fortress; he showered blows on the canvas, and the features began to take shape as though by magic." Van Dyck then suggested that he should make a portrait of Hals; but he set about his work in such a masterly fashion that Hals became suspicious, and, calling out that he must be Van Dyck himself, caught him in his arms and kissed him on both cheeks. Van Dyck always spoke of Hals as one of the finest portrait-painters of the day, adding that no one was so masterly in the use of his brush as he.

Hals never became prosperous; he painted his masterpieces, but at the same time we hear of him being had up before the magistrates for drinking and for ill-treating his wife. He lived to be very old, and in his last years was dependent on the charity of the municipality of Haarlem, who supplied him with a roof to cover him and firing to warm him.

To know Hals properly, it is necessary to go to Haarlem, and there you will find how zealously the town that supported him in his old age has done him honour. There, in the quiet old Dutch town is a sunny, sleepy little gallery, where as many as possible of his works have been collected, and where, undisturbed by other sightseers, you may study the real greatness of the master.

There, too, you may see the two methods that distinguish his early from his later work; at first

## FRANS HALS

the painting is closer, tighter, smoother ; later he painted more loosely, with grand, almost careless, sweeps of his brush, which yet result in the presentment of living, powerful portraits, characteristic of the sitter, even down to the gloved hand, or the empty glove held in the hand, for no artist ever born, except indeed Velasquez, painted these things like Hals.

## CHAPTER II

REMBRANDT (1606-1669).

WHEN we come to the work of Rembrandt, we find ourselves in the presence of a man of the highest originality, whose aim was entirely different from that of any of his predecessors in art. They had tried to paint all objects in colour, as they saw them. Rembrandt tried to represent those objects by the contrasts of light and shade which they afforded. So successful was he in this endeavour, that, true son of the Dutch people though he was, he has lifted himself far above the narrow circle of merely national appreciation, and has become of world-wide importance.

He was the son of a well-to-do miller, born on the banks of the Lower Rhine, hence called "Rembrandt of the Rhine," and some people think that his father's mill was his first school of painting ; the one ray of light, falling, when the sun shone, from the small high window into his room in the mill, must have been like the strong, single light penetrating the otherwise unbroken darkness, which you see in so many of his wonderful pictures. His father's mill was near Leyden, the oldest of the Dutch Universities,

## REMBRANDT

and it was at first hoped that the boy would go there and become a scholar. But that was not to be. Rembrandt cared only for drawing, and was sent to the studios of several native artists, arriving finally in Amsterdam, the representative of no one school, but the founder, by his genius, of a school of his own, the glory of which is imperishable. He seems to have begun by painting his own family; his father, who died in 1630, he painted several times, as a rather haggard-looking man, with a broad forehead and keen, intelligent eyes; his mother he painted still more often, a clever, kind-hearted old woman, sometimes with her Bible in her hand: it was from her, they say, that Rembrandt gained his wonderful knowledge of the Bible, which led him so often to choose Bible subjects for his pictures, and to interpret them with such unwearying skill.

The first dated work of Rembrandt is "The Money-changer," of 1627, but he had painted many portraits of himself at the age of twenty, which must belong to about the same period. Rembrandt had all his life a passion for painting his own portrait, like Rubens, whose own handsome person is often seen adorning some great group as saint or warrior. But Rembrandt painted his own rugged, thick-featured face, not because he found it in any way beautiful, but because it gave him a convenient model, and he could try on it the effect of countless disguises—beaver hats, felt hats, turbans,

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or helmets—for he was beginning to collect armour and to paint it in his pictures to enhance the interest of the problem. He has painted himself in one of these gorgets, as we see from his own portrait in Hertford House, and he made his father wear armour in one picture too, so bravely does the polished surface of the steel reflect the light, giving him just the interchange of brightness and shadow that he needed for his art.

This eagerness to obtain “properties” for his studio led him to form a friendship with an art-dealer, Hendrick van Uylenborch, and with his help Rembrandt began to form a collection of art treasures, a habit which was later to become a passion with him and lead him into many misfortunes.

In 1634 he married his friend's niece, Saskia van Uylenborch, and the brief eight years of their married life were golden ones for him. He painted his wife many times, alone and with himself; you see the two in all kinds of pictures, clothed in furs and jewels and richly embroidered raiment: once, during the time of their betrothal, he painted Saskia in a feathered hat, carrying a little sprig of rosemary in her hand, which in Holland is a symbol of betrothal. Everybody wanted to buy his work—his sacred pictures, his portraits, his etchings. He worked with astonishing care, often sketching a face in ten different positions before he painted it, or spending days arranging a turban or a head-dress

## REMBRANDT

to his taste. He had many pupils too, who came to him gladly. And all the time he was buying antiquities, especially drawings and etchings: complete sets from the works of Mantegna, we are told, and also of Albrecht Dürer; four volumes of engravings after Raphael, and a picture believed to be by Giorgione.

The first cloud on his prosperity occurred in the year 1641, when the Company of Arquebusiers in Amsterdam commissioned him to paint their portraits in a group. It was, of course, to be the kind of picture Hals painted so often and so well. But instead of the expected group, Rembrandt gave the world that masterpiece of light and shade, "The Night Watch," which now hangs by itself in a specially prepared room in the gallery at Amsterdam, the pride of the whole city. But at the time it was far from satisfying the good burghers who had ordered it. He had chosen the moment when the Company marches out of the city gates, its two officers in front, and, to the vexation of the other members, these two alone recognizable; the greater number of the Company are in deep shadow, with their guns and waving flags. Complaints were loud, but Rembrandt left the picture as it was. He had painted what seemed to himself the truest and best, and not to satisfy the lust of other men's eyes.

But the tide of prosperity turned, and private sorrows came thickly upon him. Saskia's three



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eldest children had all died in babyhood, and when the fourth, Titus, was born, Saskia died too; Rembrandt, they say, buried his happiness in her grave. In the twenty years after her death matters went from bad to worse with him, and nothing is sadder than to compare the two pictures he painted of himself, which are now in the Louvre. In the first he is the young man on the eve of a happy marriage, full of brave hopes, keen and ardent. In the second, one of his finest portraits, he is a broken man; his hair is grey, his forehead deeply lined with care and thought. We see the same contrast in the National Gallery; his earlier portrait is dated 1640, just before Saskia's death; it shows him strong, robust, self-reliant, clad in fur and velvet and fine linen. The second, painted twenty years later, is the portrait of a man broken with trouble, his face lined with anxiety. Old faces, worn by the tragic experiences of life, were always among his favourite subjects; there is a fine portrait of an old woman in the National Gallery, not painted till nearly the end of his life; her face is seared by little wrinkles, but "lovely as a Lapland night"; the calm beauty of healthy old age is still hers, as she sits there calmly in the peaked cap that shows her widowhood, and her tasselled pocket-handkerchief in her ancient hand.

Rembrandt lived with none of the reasonable magnificence that distinguished Rubens, but he

## REMBRANDT

spent vast sums on his collections; they seemed to be his way of expressing some strange, secret desire for splendour and mystery and romance. But in the evil days which befell him, he was twice forced by his creditors to sell the whole of these treasures, the suits of armour, "the coloured rags" of which the catalogue speaks, probably draperies and bits of brocades he had used for his models, all his own pictures, his drawings and etchings. The last blow to strike him was the death of his son, Titus, whom we know from his portrait at Hertford House as a pretty, long-haired youth. He died while still a young man; after that, Rembrandt's eyesight failed him, and death came, mercifully, to release him on Tuesday, October 8, 1669, "in his house at the Rozengracht, opposite the Doolhof," as the Church Register says; no other record is given in the chronicles of Amsterdam touching the death of this great man.

Rembrandt was a member of the Reformed Church. He knew his Bible well, and it may be said to have been his only reading, for, at a time when his house was full of treasures, he was found to possess hardly twenty volumes besides. He has left nearly four hundred pictures and etchings, illustrating Bible-stories, and these have been called his "Bible-pictures by candle-light." You will see an interesting example of his method in our picture, "The Prophetess Hannah and Samuel." You

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remember Hannah was the woman of a sorrowful spirit, to whom God gave in her old age a little son, Samuel. She is called a prophetess because of her inspired song of thankfulness over his birth, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in Thy salvation," that splendid song of a Jewish mother's pride in the birth of a male child. Hannah dedicated her son to the service of God from his earliest years, and in the picture Rembrandt, according to his usual custom, has painted her as a fine, middle-aged woman of his own day and rank in life, a Bible lying in her lap, just closed, for she had been reading to her child, before he kneels by her side to say his prayers. The light glows from Hannah's white cloak with a strange radiance, and is reflected in the heavy folds of her red dress and on the child's sleeve. All around in the lofty church, where she is sitting, is heavy shadow and a great emptiness, except where peasants kneel in a little group, as if at some shrine. In this way Rembrandt indicates Samuel's service in the temple of the Lord, as the beautiful head of a winged cherub carved on the pillar above Hannah's seat shows her child's innocence of heart. In the background, a graceful twisted column interrupts the gloom; the power of Rembrandt's imagination has transmuted the old story into a work of art, glowing with a strange tenderness.



*Water I. Boreby, I. R. P. S.*

THE PROPHETESS HANNAH AND SAMUEL

*After the painting by Rembrandt, (the Bridgewater House Collection)*



## REMBRANDT

In the gallery at the Hague is a wonderful "Presentation of Christ in the Temple," an early picture of a lofty interior, filled with a mysterious radiance emanating from the central group of the High Priest, Mary, and the Holy Child, and playing on the golden ornaments of the altar, while it leaves the rest of the crowded church in deep shadow. Our "Adoration of the Shepherds," in the National Gallery, is a later work, but it comes under the same head. We see here again how all the light springs from the cradle of Him Who was to be the Light of the world, and in its rays the shepherds' lantern shines feebly.

In our Gallery is another picture of a later date; it may represent Susannah of the Apocrypha. It is a marvellous picture, though at first you may see nothing much in it but an ugly woman apparently washing her clothes by trampling on them. But, as you look longer, you will see the beauty of the colour and of the warm, delicate lights and shades; and you will notice the artist's disregard of that which merely catches the eye.

The Apocrypha furnishes Rembrandt with the subject of a picture in the Louvre in which, at his cottage-door, the family of Tobias worships the Archangel Raphael, by whose means the old man's sight has been restored. In the same place are two fine pictures from New Testament stories, one representing the moment in the parable of the Good



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Samaritan when the man who fell among thieves is being tenderly confided to the innkeeper's care. It is an out-of-door scene, full of charm; only the last rays of the sun falling on the bare walls of the inn break the quiet mystery of the dying day. The other picture, quite unpretending at first sight, is his beautiful "Christ at Emmaus," which shows us with what intensity Rembrandt realizes the scenes he painted. Our Lord sits at supper with His two Apostles, pale and thin in His pilgrim's dress. He breaks the bread as at that other Supper, such a short time before. The halo round His head is palely gold, but it fills the lofty, dim-lit room with its glory, and, by an almost divine inspiration, Rembrandt surrounds the Risen Saviour with an atmosphere of holy mystery, showing that, though He is sitting there at the table with His faithful friends, He has indeed already passed beyond them, and has become part of the world of spirits.

There was in Amsterdam, in Rembrandt's day, a large and flourishing colony of Dutch and Portuguese Jews, whom he loved to paint on account of their strong, characteristic features. We have two examples of such portraits in the National Gallery—one a Jew merchant, the light strong on his bearded face and his powerful hand under its fine, ruffled sleeve; the other a Rabbi, his delicate face showing under a wide velvet cap. Rembrandt cared much for all the details of Jewish life and for their

## REMBRANDT

religious customs; his pictures give evidence how carefully he made use of this knowledge.

We possess few landscapes by Rembrandt, but there are enough to show his deep feeling for nature. A noticeable one is in the Mrs. Gardner Museum in Boston, U.S.A., called the "Landscape with the Obelisk," from the column showing upright against the wooded heights beyond. Another in Cassel, represents a ruined castle seen on a hill against a glowing sky; while a third, the famous "Windmill," which hung for a few weeks in the National Gallery for all to admire, is now in a private collection in America. The mill stands high above the river, bathed in a quiet light, and filling us with a sense of its solitary power.

In speaking of Rembrandt's work you must remember that his drawings and etchings exist in great numbers, and are much valued. They, as well as his pictures, show us how all through his life he worked and struggled, caring only for what he knew to be true; a "saint among painters," as he has been called, revealing to those who seek the best wisdom of his art.

## CHAPTER III

PAUL POTTER (1625-1654).

PAUL POTTER was a Dutch painter, who, in his short life of twenty-nine years, achieved a great deal of work of high artistic interest. He came of a good family, and his father was an artist too, though of no great eminence. Paul was a painter of cattle, and that was considered a drawback to him in his profession, as he found when he wished to marry Adriana, the daughter of Balkenede the architect and master carpenter. The girl's father asked him who would care to buy pictures of oxen and sheep, when there were plenty of fine pictures of ladies and gentlemen about. However, he gave in at last, and allowed the marriage. Potter entered the Painter's Guild at The Hague, was patronized by Prince Maurice of Orange, and became famous, even in his own day, for the masterly way in which he seized the characteristics of the different animals he painted. The Hague is a charming town, centring round a group of old buildings, in one of which, overlooking a large lake, the Picture Gallery is now housed; it is called the Maurice House, because it used to be the palace of Prince Maurice. A great lake or fish-



Han/staengl.

THE YOUNG BULL.  
(After the picture by Paul Potter at the Hague.)



## PAUL POTTER

pond lies behind, and the house rises straight out of the water, so that, from this treasury of pictures, you look right over its smooth surface. Potter's best-known picture, "The Young Bull," painted when he was only twenty-three, is there ; you see it in our illustration, the strong young animal clearly outlined against the sky. The cow lies at the foot of a pollarded willow-tree ; a little family of sheep are there too : the ram with his twisted horns, the gentle ewe and the plump lamb. To the right of the picture is a lovely little landscape, with meadows and trees, and a church-spire in the distance, just as you may see any day as your train speeds south through the plains of Holland. The picture is on a large scale, larger much than the Dutch painters usually chose ; its size suits the bold handling of the animals, and the bull stands out as if modelled against the background. In the same Gallery is another of Potter's pictures, smaller and less famous, but more beautiful in its effect of atmosphere. It is a cow reflected in clear water ; the whole landscape is full of the spirit of a fresh, sweet summer morning.

In the National Gallery we have a little landscape with cattle of great beauty, painted only a few years before Potter's death. Everything he painted was carefully studied from nature, and we are told that he never went for a walk into the country without his sketch-book and drawing-pen, with which he



## DUTCH PAINTERS

noted down effects as they struck him. Volumes of such studies were found after his death, all bound in bearskin. They are now carefully preserved among the art-treasures of Berlin, and are of great interest; one is filled with studies of trees; another has, among countless drawings of animals in every position, sketches of market carts and waggons, ploughs and farming implements of every description, most minutely drawn. Boats he drew too, and windmills—Holland is full of windmills to this day—a copper milk-pail beautifully finished, all notes for pictures he was destined never to paint. The last volume of the set has studies of flowers, drawn in Indian ink and washed in with water-colour; poppies, crocuses, the cuckoo-pint, king-cups, irises, all kinds of flowers, delicately true to nature. You can see from our picture of the bull how carefully the dock-leaves and meadow-weeds are painted, on which the bull's fore-feet are resting. Sometimes, but more rarely, there are sketches of birds; and it is curious to note that he had seen a hoopoe, and has drawn him accurately with his crest and little upright figure.

Paul Potter stands by himself in his art, and, though he lived partly in Amsterdam, where Rembrandt was working with all the magic of his full maturity, and partly at Haarlem, where Hals was producing his wonderful series of groups, neither master appears to have exercised the least influence

## CUYP

over him. His outlook, his method of painting, were all his own; he worked patiently, humbly, unweariedly, as if he knew how short a time lay before him. He had no pupils, founded no school, but he has left to all artists the brilliant example of a life passed in conscientious effort. It has been said that he was a genius who rarely displayed talent, and that is a true criticism, for he strove to paint sincerely what he saw, without a thought of applause to be gained or patrons to be flattered.

### CUYP (1620-1691).

Paul Potter was, as you have seen, an animal painter, who used landscape chiefly as a background for his pictures; we now come to Cuyp, a landscape painter, who introduced cattle into his landscapes. He loved best to paint a country scene, through which a quiet river flows with cows standing or lying on its banks, or perhaps a company of horsemen grouped on a little hillside, enjoying the wide view. Sometimes he painted broad rivers alive with shipping under calm summer skies, and his work is always conspicuous for its clear light, whether he paints the cool freshness of early morning, the heat of noonday, or the rich glow of the setting sun. His animals lack the distinctive grace of his landscapes, but all his pictures were highly valued in his own country during his lifetime, and for many

## DUTCH PAINTERS

years after his death. The first foreigners to appreciate his delicate and beautiful work were the English, about the time of George III. : the country gentlemen of that period collected his pictures and were willing to pay good prices for them, and it is for that reason that so much of his best work is to be found in England.

One specially good example of Cuyp's work is in the Dulwich Gallery, where the cattle are in the shadow, and stand out darkly against the warm colours of a river ; another in the same Gallery shows us herdsmen driving cattle on a warm, still summer evening. The National Gallery, too, is rich in Cuyps. They hang together, covering nearly one whole wall ; looking at them is like a long, slow walk through sweet country places on a soft summer day. You see flights of birds crossing the blue of the skies, the sun shining on the backs of white horses and on the white shirts of sturdy children ; or you cross the meadows by the raised, grassy causeway, looking towards a little township full of windmills ; or you see the cows, collected for milking-time, among the blackberry brambles and dock-leaves in the foreground ; and, again, you see red-coated riders on dappled-grey horses fording a river ; or a group of cattle at evening-time, all glorious in the glow of sunset. In the Louvre there is a beautiful landscape, a shepherd playing his flute, his back to a calm sheet of water, his cattle grazing around

## CUYP

him, and across the water the skyline broken by a high church-tower. Cuyp painted winter scenes, also one of fishermen at work on the frozen Meuse, the ice lit up by the bright sunshine—everywhere sunshine, for, as it has been well said, Cuyp first set the sun in the sky, and filled his pictures full of light, so that they give joy to those who study them.

Almost all we know of Cuyp comes to us through his pictures, but we learn that, when he was nearly forty, he married a rich wife, a widow, Cornelia van den Corput. He lived at Dordrecht, and thanks to her fortune and to his growing prosperity, he ended his days in comfort.

His work may be compared with that of the French artist Claude, his senior by twenty years. Claude painted in Italy, and if you look at his "Seaport at Sunset" in the National Gallery, you will see the anchored ships bright in the rays of the setting sun. Claude, like Cuyp, loved to paint the effects of sunshine. But Cuyp stands alone in his power of saturating his pictures in golden light, and it is chiefly by that quality we know and value the work of this early landscape painter.

## HOBBEEMA (1638-1709).

Hobbema is a landscape painter; of his life we know very little, just the date of his birth, that of his marriage, 1668, and the fact that he died in poverty in

## DUTCH PAINTERS

Amsterdam, in the Rozengracht, the very same street in which Rembrandt had died forty years before. Like so many of his contemporaries, his pictures found little or no sale during his lifetime, and for more than a hundred years after his death his name was not to be found in any dictionary of art. The first time his pictures were included in any art catalogue was in 1739. He painted mostly country scenes from the Province of Guelderland, villages embowered in green, watermills, tracts of country broken by quiet rows of trees, fields and meadows, pools reflecting the sky. Sometimes he painted canals, or the quays and walls of little towns; once or twice he added a ruined castle. His trees are carefully studied from nature. His best-known picture is in the National Gallery, "The Avenue at Middelharnis." Most towns and villages in Holland are approached by just such avenues, which, when the trees are not lopped, as in the picture, afford pleasant shade to those who walk out into the country in summer-time. Here the long, straight road is enclosed by tall, formal beech-trees, and on both sides of the road are ditches, into which the water drains for the use of the market-gardens beyond; a gardener is at work in one of the prim gardens with its grafted bush-stems. In the distance is the little town of Middelharnis, with its red roofs and its church-tower and quaint belfry. The avenue widens out to the foreground: the whole picture is com-



## HOBBEWA

posed in an original and charming way, and is yet so true to nature you are reminded of it a hundred times as you walk about the roads and fields of Holland.

The National Gallery has several other pictures of his: one of the ruined Castle of Brerode; another, a landscape seen in showery weather; and one, a village with watermills; his subjects constantly recur, as you see from those in Hertford House too; they are painted, however, in all variety of light—some in sunset glow, some in clear morning sunshine, some bright with the spring.

Though Hobbema lived till 1709, few of his pictures, as we learn from their dates, were painted later than 1670. The beautiful "Avenue" bears the date 1689, and is apparently his last. They say that after his marriage, his wife's influence got him a little post in the Custom-house, and his life as a petty official interfered perhaps with his work as an artist.

When we consider the landscapes of Hobbema and the other Dutch masters, we must remember that they were the first who painted movement in the sky, as seen by the passage of the clouds and the whole changing pageant of the heavens. Before them, painters had been satisfied with painting the colour of the sky and indicating great airy spaces by shades of blue, varied by white or greyish clouds. But in the Dutch landscapes the sky



## DUTCH PAINTERS

occupies sometimes half the picture ; from it we know the season of the year and the time of day : the art of painting it became one of the problems to be conquered. No painter after them could ignore the sky. The study of it and its representation became one of the evidences of their sincerity, as they patiently observed Nature in all her moods.

## CHAPTER IV

JAN STEEN (1626-1679).

JAN STEEN, a typical painter of Dutch life, was born at Leyden, one of the University towns of Holland. He was a brewer's son, and learnt his trade from his father, even keeping a tavern himself, as some say, while he carried on his art of a painter. He was a member of the Painters' Guild at Haarlem, and in spite of his jovial, drink-loving habits, he must have been astonishingly industrious, observing the peculiarities of the people around him, even while he shared their vices, and painting always with rare skill and truthfulness. He began by drawing his own family, sitting in a room "about as orderly as a Spanish guard-room," we are told, with dogs and cats and children tumbling over one another, his wife in her easy chair, the monkey winding up the clock, and he himself comfortably drinking from a large wineglass, unmoved by the confusion around. He painted the signboard for his own inn, a picture of Peace, her garland in her hand. They tell us that when his vats and casks were all empty, and he had no money left to buy more with, he would pull down his signboard and

## DUTCH PAINTERS

set to work, painting pictures till he had made enough money to set his inn going again. It must have been worth a man's while to frequent Steen's tavern, for, in spite of his riotous way of living he had a clever tongue and an active mind, and his shrewd remarks about painting proved that he had a real knowledge of his art. The very genius of the Dutch character appears in his pictures—their humour, tenacity to a few ideas, power of concentration. To that was added Steen's own inexhaustible good spirits, his love of fun, and knowledge of his subjects. English people have always appreciated these qualities, and many of his pictures are now in England.

We have one Jan Steen in the National Gallery, "The Music Master," bored with his task, one pupil sitting at the harpsichord, and the next coming in with his lute. The harpsichord is beautifully inlaid and painted with mottoes for the edification of those who played on it. Here we read, "Acta Virum Probant," and "Soli Deo Gloria," together with the important statement, "Johanis Steen fecit." We have also a recent gift, a charming little picture from the Salting Collection; it is a group of skittle-players, standing about in the full, limpid light of a summer afternoon, under the delicate tracery of the leafy trees. It has something of the Hogarth quality, because the people are really interested in their own concerns, and are

## JAN STEEN

not, as in so many Dutch pictures of the period, only grouped to carry out some charming design of the painter.

Steen delighted in children, and was never weary of showing them at their merry tricks ; he gives us boys at school, boys teasing the cat, or stealing money from their roistering parents' pockets. He paints sunlight with great effect, sometimes lying in warm patches outside an open door, sometimes playing on the trunks of trees. He was much interested in doctors and their way of handling their patients. One such picture, now in the Maurice House at The Hague, makes a delightful interior. The sick lady lies in her spacious bed with its high, fringed canopy, the velvet curtains are drawn back, and she is looking languidly at the lady in shining satin, who is bringing the black-robed doctor a glass of wine for his refreshment. On the wall over the bed is a great oil-painting of the " Rape of the Sabines," placed there slyly by Steen, just as Hogarth later loved to decorate the walls in his pictures with appropriate subjects. The same story is treated a little differently in a picture in the Amsterdam Gallery ; here the lady is sitting up, dressed in a skirt of yellow silk and a silver-grey jacket, edged with ermine. She rests her pretty kerchiefed head on a pillow, while the doctor, his cloak draped over his suit of black velvet, holds her shapely wrist respectfully, taking her pulse. In

## DUTCH PAINTERS

another picture at The Hague the lady is in green and blue ; the doctor wears a tall steeple-crown hat and, as in all the other pictures, he keeps it on in the room ; he carries his long, loose gloves in his left hand. The room is high and finely proportioned, the chimney-piece is richly carved, several fine pictures hang on the walls, and on the high mantelpiece a gay statuette of Cupid is seen, maliciously aiming an arrow at the fair patient's heart.

The travelling quack-doctor is represented too in several charming out-of-door scenes. In one he stands under an oak-tree, offering his cures to the village people on a fine summer day ; his counter is improvised with a stout board on the top of a barrel. In another the doctor has just drawn a tooth from an unhappy patient ; the admiring villagers are grouped around, and in the background leafy trees are seen, and the church-spire nestling among them. In all Steen's pictures there is a boundless store of happy invention ; he interested himself in everything he saw, and he knew exactly how to paint it. Therefore his pictures will not fail to interest all those who, in succeeding generations, care to be shown human life with its varying aspects of fun and drollery.

## PIETER DE HOOCH

PIETER DE HOOCH (1629-1677).

In considering the high state of civilization to which the Dutch people attained in the seventeenth century, you must not forget that Amsterdam was at that period the centre of the financial activities of the whole world. Much money was earned and spent there, and commercial enterprise was at its height. Quite early in the century the Dutch East and West India Companies were founded, and from those far-off countries of romance riches flowed into all corners of the small, ambitious Northern land. Strange spices were brought from overseas, and curious bulbs, to flower presently into exquisite tulips, all purple and gold. Some brightness from those lands of sunshine seems to have been brought into the grey monotony of Holland, and to have come to life unexpectedly under its cheerless skies. You see it in some piece of furniture made of rare foreign woods and carved with exotic flowers, or in some bits of precious china from the East, carefully set in rows on the high mantelshelves, bringing the excitement of romance into the sober rooms, whose polished orderliness tells of scrupulous daily care.

What ideal beauty was to the Italian painter, this worship of the real was to the Dutchman, and among their artists there was no one more sensitive to the beauty of the everyday life around him than Pieter de Hooch, that "painter of sunshine," as he



## DUTCH PAINTERS

has been called. This charming painter lives for us chiefly in his works; we know little of his life, even the dates of his birth and death are only reckoned approximately from those given by him on his signed pictures. His father was a mason in Rotterdam, and his mother had been a nurse. They seem to have been in easy circumstances, and he was sent to Amsterdam to learn to be a painter. He must have arrived there a few years after Rembrandt had finished his celebrated "Night Watch." But de Hooch did not make his home in the capital, and his first picture was painted in Delft at the age of twenty-four. Here he lived for the best part of his artistic life so quietly that we look in vain for details as to his personality and manner of life. But we need not seek to know more; the master lives for us in those sun-lit, quiet courtyards and spacious, cool rooms he has painted so entrancingly. Delft must have become the home of his affections, for something of it appears in most of his best pictures, the tower of its New Church, its abundant trees, and the peaceful canals in which the gabled roofs and the low walls of its little quays are so calmly mirrored.

Through his pictures the daily life of his time comes home vividly before our eyes; we see the lady at her toilet, or writing her letters; we see a family concert, or jolly cavaliers at their ease, drinking their wine or chatting with their women-folk.

## PIETER DE HOOCH

We see, too, the life of the servants who ministered to the families of quality ; they are preparing the fish for dinner, sweeping the floors or shaking up the bedding. Some say that de Hooch had himself been a servant, and knew their ways from experience ; we are even told the name of his master, Justus de la Grange, a kindly fellow who later became a bankrupt and emigrated to America with his family.

What Rembrandt did when he introduced shadow into the world of Dutch art, Pieter de Hooch did with sunlight, when he shows us those mild rays of a Northern sun, filtering through narrow window-panes, and falling in broad splashes on walls, bare or hung with Spanish leather, on floors paved in geometrical designs of black, blue, or white marble, or on the plain tiles of kitchens. His sunlight dances, too, on the pictures hanging on the walls, waking them to a new life ; on the brass warming-pan hanging conveniently near the curtained bed ; on the pretty bird-cage on its hook, which shelters behind its shining bars a little parakeet or some strange bird from foreign parts.

You can see four of de Hooch's pictures in the National Gallery : our illustration reproduces one of them. The room shown has a raftered ceiling and a floor of black and white marble ; two small-paned windows admit the light ; daylight is here, as always, his supreme achievement. Over the wide,

## DUTCH PAINTERS

comfortable chimney-piece is a large oil-painting of some sacred subject ; the map of the United Provinces is nailed on the wall with a fine decorative effect. At a small table two well-dressed men sit to drink their wine, which a woman in a black velvet jacket presents to them. One man has his plumed hat on his knee, for comfort, not civility ; the other is wearing his broad-brimmed beaver. A maid-servant is bringing in a smoking brazier ; you will notice that she has been painted as an after-thought, the marble of the floor appearing through the thin paint of her petticoat. Two other courtyard scenes are in the same gallery, both marked by the same exquisite orderliness, to this day characteristic of Dutch burgher-life, and a great contrast to the slovenliness of the rooms in Steen's tavern-pictures. Those of de Hooch are so clean, so well-swept and tidy that there is even a sort of cheerful desolation about them. Above both is the pale blue sky of a Dutch summer, flecked by fleecy clouds. In one picture the buttress of an old wall is seen, and a porch built of white stone and red brick alternately. Above the arch and half hidden by a branch of straggling vine is a panel with an inscription in Dutch and the date 1614. The building itself is older far ; it had been the Cloister of S. Jerome, turned after the Reformation into a private house. In the other picture it is evidently early spring ; a leafless tree is seen, and the light is clear, even a



Mansell

INTERIOR OF A DUTCH HOUSE.  
(By Pieter de Hooch in the National Gallery, London.)





## PIETER DE HOOCH

little hard. The master of the house is walking towards us, down a long pathway, in his big white collar and square-toed shoes with large rosettes. Every detail of the little, clean court is given with extraordinary fidelity: the pump, the broom, the platter, the bowl; it is an object-lesson in admirable housewifery.

In the Wallace Collection, you may see an interior, probably from Amsterdam, where de Hooch lived for the last years of his life; the house stands on the side of a canal, and through the open door the street and houses opposite look confusingly near, so narrow is the canal between. Another picture in the same gallery is the "Woman peeling Potatoes," very characteristic of de Hooch's methods. The mother smiles at her little girl as she puts a long curl of potato-peel into her hand. The child is dressed like a grown-up person, stiff and solid, but she wears the long leading-strings of babyhood, which you still see on undergraduates' gowns. The mother's coat of rich velvet, edged with white fur, makes you perhaps wonder at her homely occupation, but she represents quite faithfully the life of her time. We have a letter describing a visit paid to the widow of our ancient enemy, de Ruyter. It tells how the good lady had had a fall while hanging out her linen to dry, and how, before this accident, it had always been her habit to go to the market herself, her basket on her arm.



## DUTCH PAINTERS

The fine Renaissance chimney-piece in the room, with its tiles and carvings, the fire-light playing on the andirons, the window just open, its sunny reflection beautifying the bare wall against which the woman sits, all make a picture such as de Hooch loved to paint—a little world of calm domesticities, caressed and gilded by sunshine, in which he places a woman resigned, smiling and gentle, busy with her child, looking well to the ways of her household. You will see pictures by him in many galleries, in Berlin, in the Louvre, in Amsterdam, in Nuremberg, and they will always call to you to pause and consider, so full are they of lovable qualities and amazing excellences.

He had, to an astonishing degree, the sense of perspective, and seldom content with showing us the three walls of a room, he adds open doors and vistas of rooms beyond with passages down which his figures advance or retreat, on their way to or from the courtyard or the road beyond. Often his people turn their backs on us, revealing their intentions only by a lifted hand, or a back bent over the raised lid of a water-tub ; nothing could be more real ; it is like the admirably planned scene of some interesting stage-play of everyday life.

As with his people, so with the inanimate objects, which, in his pictures, have something intimate and touching about them, so beautifully are they placed in the general scheme of the composition.

## PIETER DE HOOCH

We come to care for the little mirrors with their broad, black frames, the shining tables and chairs, the wicker-baskets filled with wool or linen, just as we care for our own possessions. Everything stands there, well-kept, ready for use, admirable for its purpose. We feel we have been admitted into all the intimacies of a wholesome daily life, full of orderliness, that modest luxury of the poor no less than of the rich. It is de Hooch's favourite luxury, and it breathes from the heart of all his homes, tranquil with the poetry of subdued sunlight.

The secret of de Hooch's charm is that he can show us the hidden beauty of common things, and interpret the mystery of those quiet housewives with their expression of soft harshness and their constant dignity of attitude. He gives us the same impression of half-wistful sadness as Dürer, though the German artist painted under brighter skies; that sadness which is almost joy in the silent country of Holland, where people speak only to express some necessary thought, and live austere lives, illuminated by his art with the grace of falling sunlight.



## PART VI

### THE SPANISH PAINTERS

THE Spaniards are a grave race, and the sunshine of their country only makes the shadows deeper. Spanish pictures are grave, too ; their colours are deep and sober ; they make us think of sheltered rooms with half-closed shutters, and churches dark in contrast to the hot streets without. The Spaniards liked to paint scenes taken from real life, even when, as mostly happens, their pictures are of sacred subjects. For Spain is, before all things, a religious country, and the priests are all-powerful. In old times they had the right to condemn anything in art which appeared to them unsuitable, and they laid down strict laws with regard to sacred pictures. Thus, angels must have wings, and the Madonna must be clothed in robes of blue and white, long enough to hide her feet. Pictures were hung in churches and chapels in order that people who could not read might learn the doctrines of their faith from them, and the scenes painted had to be realistic, so that they might be easily recognized by the ignorant.

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

This had a far-reaching effect, as you may imagine, and nowhere are Crucifixions represented with more terrible realism than in Spain. The Inquisition in Spain tortured those who did not practise the religion of the country, and the Christ in Whose Name these cruelties were done had to be shown, too, in His Agony. You remember how in the Dutch and Flemish pictures the painters delighted in showing their own country, to alien eyes so flat and dull, as a lovely land in all seasons of the year, their own quiet homes as full of peaceful beauty. You find nothing of that idealism in Spanish art. But you will find much to charm and interest you, and one master, Velasquez, whose name is greatly honoured as one of the supreme artists of the world. Besides Velasquez, and before him in point of date, is El Greco, of foreign birth, but from the first always counted among the Spaniards; Murillo, whose pictures differ widely from the majority of sober Spanish work; and Goya, different again, as you will see, in that he painted for the most part after the French Revolution had shaken Europe to its foundations.

## CHAPTER I

EL GRECO (1545-1614).

WITH El Greco you must turn back to the sixteenth century, to the time of Hals and Rubens, but to a country far removed indeed from the Netherlands where they worked. Theotocopuli was his real name, and he was, as I have said, a foreign painter who worked in Spain, and was always called "El Greco," or, the Greek. His name will be for ever associated with the town of Toledo, that romantic, high-walled city standing on its hillside above the yellow waters of the Tagus. By birth he was a Cretan ; this we know from several of his signed pictures. He must have been in Venice, and he had studied the painting of Titian, whose influence is clearly shown in his earlier compositions. By 1577 he was settled in Toledo, and had already begun a picture for the Cathedral there, which still hangs in the sacristy. It represents the "Parting of our Lord's Raiment," and you will see from the first glance how different this man's work is from any you have before seen. Round the central figure of Christ, in a narrow space, many figures are clustered, all with the same long, thin



## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

faces, yet with varying expressions. The face of Christ Himself is of singular beauty. Near Him is a tall bearded man in black armour, the Centurion—El Greco's own portrait, they tell us. Though so crowded with heads, the composition of the picture is quite clear, and the impression of the whole scene is exceedingly vivid. The fame of it was so great that the King, Philip II., the husband of our Queen Mary, ordered him to paint an altar-piece for the Escorial Chapel; but this picture did not meet with the royal approval. All his life El Greco loved to paint in what we should now call an unconventional manner, giving his patrons what they often neither expected nor wished for. Four years later, however, he painted, for one of the Cardinals, his greatest work, "The Burial of Count Orgaz," and from our illustration you will see the astonishing force and originality of its conception. The picture was given to the Church of Santo Tomé in Toledo, a church which had been rebuilt by Count Orgaz in the fourteenth century. To reward this munificence, S. Stephen and S. Augustine had, so said the legend, come down from Heaven, and buried the Count with their own hands. In the foreground of the picture you see the entombment. Count Orgaz is in full armour, black, richly inlaid with gold; his dead face shows calm above his ruff; his mailed hands are meekly folded. S. Augustine, in his gorgeous vestments, is the old



*Anderson.*

THE BURIAL OF COUNT D'ORGAZ.  
(After the picture by El Greco at Toledo.)



## EL GRECO

man with a white beard, supporting his head ; S. Stephen, young and dark-haired, holds his feet. The kneeling boy, dressed as a page, and holding a lighted torch, may have been the Count's son, or he was, as some think, painted from El Greco's little daughter. One priest, in full canonicals, reads the Office for the Burial of the Dead from his book ; behind are the finely painted heads of the attendant nobles, with pointed beards and high ruffs. Some of these are certainly portraits of Spanish noblemen of El Greco's day. Above them the soul of the dead man enters the kingdom of the blest. You will notice the curious flat clouds, and the tremendously elongated form of the Count in Paradise, kneeling at Christ's feet. The whole of the upper portion is in sharp contrast to the quiet beauty of the lower. This picture brought El Greco fame and fortune. Convents and churches vied with each other in securing work from him, and left him free to invent as he liked the great mystic scenes in which he delighted.

El Greco painted portraits too. You will see many of them in the Royal Gallery at Madrid. One beautiful picture by him in a private collection in England represents, we believe, his daughter. It is the picture of a young woman with full, round, dark eyes, and thick dark hair, combed away from her forehead, and tied round with a lace-edged scarf. She wears a cloak with a wide fur collar, and

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

the whole strikes you as full of vitality and a kind of modernness. She seems nearer our own day than many women whose portraits were painted far later. You will see, in the National Gallery, Cardinal Gaspar de Quiroga, the patron who gave El Greco the commission for the Santo Tomé altarpiece, and you must notice the immense length of his face, exaggerated still more by the floating beard and the length of his fingers, as he holds his book open on the table before him. Another portrait, that of the Grand Inquisitor, Don Fernando de Guevara, is in the Havemeyer Collection in New York. He sits richly robed and inscrutable ; large, round, black-rimmed spectacles increasing the grimness of his aspect. In El Greco's life, so little of which is known to us, these men and women whom he painted appear to us as his friends, and help us to reconstruct his story, for many famous people sat to him—cardinals and poets, doctors and lawyers, women with romantic faces, monks and noblemen.

In his colouring El Greco loved, before all things, every gradation of white and black, and in his work we see reappearing the old ideals of the forgotten Byzantine artists—the slender figures of their people, their willowy movements, and the long oval of their faces. But El Greco was not only a painter, he was also a sculptor, an architect, and a poet. We imagine him, indeed, a man full of nervous energy, silent, dignified, deeply religious, and regarding his art as an



## EL GRECO

outlet for that mystical life which beat so strongly within him. We are told how a painter-critic, Pacheco by name, came from Seville to visit him one day. The talk fell naturally upon art, and El Greco horrified his visitor by saying that "Michelangelo was a great man, but he did not know how to paint." It shows El Greco's independence of character that he should have dared to express such a criticism, and it was probably his way of saying that, great though the Florentine master was, he is known to fame by his drawing and by his masterly designs rather than by his colouring.

But in all things El Greco was independent. When he sold a picture he reserved for himself the right to buy it back, should he wish. He brought with him from his distant home ideas strange to the men of Toledo. He had built for himself a charming house in the country, quite in the Cretan fashion, as we are told. He loved music, and was reproached for his extravagance, because he kept in his house hired musicians who played to him as he sat at his meals. He lived in all ways the life of a cultured man of his day, delighting in conversation and discussion with his learned friends, visiting them and sitting with them in their gardens. He lived all the later years of his life at Toledo, and died there, over sixty years of age, leaving, we are told, "for his whole wealth two hundred sketches for pictures only." It has been thought that these "sketches" were really finished



## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

pictures in his latest manner ; for, as he grew older, his eccentricities in painting seem to have increased upon him, and to those who carelessly ransacked his treasures after his death, the pictures that he had conceived at the last may well have appeared only wild designs for pictures never carried out. But this we can never know for certain.

El Greco must always remain to us an enigmatical person ; but, as a great mystical painter, whose pictures fill us constantly with admiration and a kind of awe, his name can never be forgotten where mention is made of the art of Spain.

It is exactly three centuries ago since El Greco died on April 7, 1614, and for this anniversary a solemn festival was held in the Cathedral at Toledo. The dead man's palette lay on his tomb, and his name was praised by messengers from the Pope himself.

El Greco's house, the very house, they say, which he built and in which he worked and painted those curiously modern pictures of his, has been dedicated to his memory, and from its walled garden can be seen, unchanged, the view his eyes must often have rested upon over the Tagus and the red-brown hills, where grey-green olive-trees grow in groups under the deep blue sky of Castile.

## CHAPTER II

VELASQUEZ (1599-1660).

VELASQUEZ, the greatest painter of Spain, was born of gentle parentage, in the proud merchant city of Seville, and was taught the beginnings of his art in his native town. One of his early masters was that same Pacheco who had visited El Greco at Toledo, and Pacheco believed in the young artist's gifts, and in time gave him his daughter Juana in marriage. At his father-in-law's house, Velasquez met good company of every kind, but his growing ambition needed a further outlet, and he finally travelled with Pacheco to Madrid, where he was kindly received by that patron of all the arts, Philip IV. This success had, however, been earned by years of serious work; Velasquez the artist did not spring as by a miracle to sudden fame. He had worked for long in Pacheco's studio, and we have a record of his ceaseless industry while there in a book written by his father-in-law himself. He worked much from the living model, making his servant-lad pose when others failed. He would draw the same figure over and over again, till he had acquired ease and dexterity in seizing all the expressions of

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

the human face. He then practised painting what is called "still life," placing together pots and pans, pitchers and drinking-cups, so grouped that the light on the copper, or the glaze of the earthenware, became so many problems to be conquered by his brush. Of these studies many pictures still remain to bear witness to his skill; amongst them is our illustration, "The Woman making an Omelette." You see the wrinkled peasant woman, her white kerchief thrown over her head, cooking her eggs in a pan over a brazier, just as you may see them cooked in any Spanish town to this day, for kitchen-fires or stoves are unknown. A dark-faced boy stands opposite, a melon under his arm. There is no story; everything has been chosen for its value in the composition, and the result is a picture, accurate, as though drawn by a Dutch master. The original is in a private collection in England, and you may perhaps see it some day in a Loan Exhibition and enjoy its fine qualities.

The Duke of Wellington has another picture of this period, "The Water Seller," painted from one of the sun-burnt fellows who, in the hot summer months, sell water through the thirsty streets of Seville. This picture was among those taken by Velasquez to Madrid and sold by him to Philip. Joseph Bonaparte carried it away with him in his retreat, but it fell into the great Duke's hands after the Battle of Vittoria. Another picture, also painted



THE LITTLE WOMAN

*After the painting by Leonaque in the Church of San Jerónimo, Madrid*



## VELASQUEZ

in Seville, is our "Adoration of the Shepherds," in the National Gallery. The Holy Family is here painted as a group of real peasants, life-like and simple; a black-haired child is holding his offering, a dead bird, drawn out of his market-basket, to the Holy Child in His swaddling bands, and under the stable-roof a tiny Angel hangs, a point of light like the Epiphany star.

In 1621 Philip IV. had come to the throne, and two years later Velasquez began his new life in Madrid. It was just about this time that Prince Charles, afterwards Charles I., had come to Spain, courting the hand of the King's sister. The English Prince sat to Velasquez for his portrait, but the picture is thought to have been lost, and with it our chance of seeing how the great Spaniard would have presented the melancholy Stuart countenance we know so well from Van Dyck. There is, however, in the possession of the Princess Royal of England an early portrait of Prince Charles, which has always been called a Velasquez, and it is possible that this is the missing picture. It has the well-known Stuart look, but the lips are fuller, and it is the face of a Charles still untouched by the perplexities of his later life.

The part that Van Dyck played for us in England, painting for us a Charles I. to be for all time known and realized, Velasquez played in Spain, painting again and again his royal master, Philip IV., whose handsome person, stately presence,



## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

and pale, haughty face are possibly only the painter's interpretation of a rather sickly-looking gentleman with limp, blonde hair and slow though generous emotions. Here in England you may see Velasquez's Philip in the Dulwich Gallery ; it is the King at the age of thirty-nine in the red, white, and silver dress of a Commander-in-Chief ; a masterpiece, both as regards colour and design. In the National Gallery we have two portraits of him, one the head and shoulders only, magnificently vivid as a bust against the gloom of the background, round his neck the Order of the Golden Fleece ; the other, a full-length study in black and silver, the left hand on the rapier-hilt.

A famous portrait of Philip on horseback is in Madrid ; he is riding gallantly a bay charger ; he wears a plumed hat, gold-embroidered breeches, and a crimson scarf tied across his cuirass of burnished steel, the ends fluttering in the breeze ; in the background are the mountains of Castile. You may see a good copy of this picture in Hertford House, where is also an original portrait of great interest, because it is one of the very few painted by Velasquez of an ordinary, everyday person ; it is called "A Lady of the Middle Classes." You will find her extraordinarily attractive, this quiet lady in her black dress with her fan and rosary, looking at you so gently with her full, dark eyes, and you will wonder, as many have done, who the lady was, and

## VELASQUEZ

how the great Court painter came to paint her portrait.

In 1628 Rubens came to Madrid as the bearer, you will remember, of letters from Isabella, Governess of the Netherlands, to the Court of Spain. The two painters became friends, Velasquez being then twenty-nine, and Rubens fifty-one, years of age, and it was by the older man's advice that Velasquez sought leave from his master to visit Italy. While there, we are told, he studied with immense admiration the works of Michelangelo, of Titian, and of Paolo Veronese. He delighted in the natural beauties of Rome, where he spent two months at the Villa Medici, and you may still see in Madrid two sketches that he made there of its gardens, in all their splendour of tall cypresses and colonnades, marble statues and springing fountains. In the National Gallery there is a picture which was apparently painted under the influence of this Italian visit. It is the "Christ at the Column," a very dramatic and simple representation of this terrible scene, the horror of which is softened by the tall Angel, who bends to teach a small white-robed child to kneel in prayer before the Christ in agony.

On his return to Madrid Velasquez lived for nineteen years continuously at Philip's Court, travelling with him when he went into the country, and even accompanying him when he went on a campaign.

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

The pictures which he painted during this period fall into three groups. First, he painted hunting-scenes, with landscape as the background. We have an excellent example of one of these scenes in the "Philip IV. of Spain hunting the Wild Boar" of the National Gallery. The sport is carried on in an enclosed amphitheatre, surrounded by a grassy valley. The spectators are grouped outside the barrier, but Queen Isabella and her ladies are within, seated in their coaches for greater privacy. The King, on horseback, is attended by his gentlemen. He was, we are told, an ardent huntsman, and the best rider in Spain. Behind rise wooded heights, shutting in the valley, and over all float snowy clouds in a calm sky.

Under this heading we may include the delightful sketches called "Conversations," one of which is in the Louvre; a meeting of well-dressed men, who stand in groups, chatting with animation. Another is in a private collection in England. Under a high archway four small figures are seen, who stand in easy, conversational attitudes, one with a red cloak thrown over his shoulder. You may see the same people among the spectators at the "Boar Hunt."

Secondly, Velasquez painted pictures to illustrate historical subjects. Of these the best example is the "Surrender of Breda," in Madrid. It was painted as a decorative panel for Philip's new palace of Buen Retiro, in order to commemorate the cap-

## VELASQUEZ

ture of Breda in 1625, the crowning achievement of the war between Spain and the Netherlands. The Spaniards had besieged the town of Breda, near Antwerp, for a whole year. It had at last surrendered to the Genoese General, Spinola, who led the Spanish troops, and who had given honourable terms to the gallant enemy. In this fine picture you see the Governor of Breda delivering up the key of the fortress to his conqueror, who, bareheaded, lays his hand protectingly on his opponent's shoulder. It is war at its courtliest. The Spanish lances cut across the horizon ; in the background the enemy's flag is seen, as the vanquished army retreats over the wide plain of the Netherlands.

Thirdly, Velasquez painted many portraits of the Royal Family, besides those I have already mentioned of the King himself. One of the most famous is the little Prince Don Balthazar on horseback. The boy was a bold rider, and delighted his father by his prowess. In the picture the child sits his stout, galloping pony like a hero, brave in his green doublet and fluttering scarf. The landscape behind is exquisite, bathed in light : a fairy glimpse of far-off woods and mountains. Another picture of the same boy-Prince is in Hertford House. He is riding proudly outside the riding-school, where he is to have a lesson, lance in hand. This riding-school still stands in Madrid, and is now called the Royal Armoury. The portrait of the Admiral Pulido da

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

Preja in the National Gallery may come under this heading, although he was a royal servant only, and not of royal blood. The story is told of this life-like picture, that Philip, coming one day into the studio, mistook the portrait for the hardy, vigorous sailor himself, and upbraided his Admiral for not being with his fleet in the Indies.

In the National Gallery, and belonging to none of these classes, is the recently purchased "Venus and the Mirror," the only nude figure, as far as we know, that Velasquez ever painted. The Catholic Church forbade such pictures, and it was only by the King's special intervention that permission was given for this one to be painted. The goddess lies at full length on her couch, with its black draperies. Her little dove-winged Cupid holds a mirror for her, into which she gazes, the lovely lines of her back turned to the spectators. This device of the mirror-reflection was much used by Velasquez. It is called the "Rokeby Venus," because it was for many years in the possession of the owner of Rokeby Hall, Yorkshire.

In 1649 Velasquez went for a second time to Italy with a commission to buy pictures by "Titian, Veronese, Raphael, and the like," for the Royal Gallery in Madrid; but, arrived in Rome, he confessed that "Raphael's art pleased him not at all." He enjoyed the society of many living artists, among others Nicolas Poussin, the Frenchman, who



## VELASQUEZ

lived almost all his life in Italy, and painted many pictures of scholarly beauty. The Pope Innocent X. himself commissioned Velasquez to paint his portrait, but the painter, fearing that his hand had lost its cunning during his journeyings, first painted a picture of his own Moorish servant, which he exhibited in Rome to the delight of all beholders.

The portrait of the Pope shows us a strongly featured, vigorous man of about seventy-four. You will remember how highly Raphael's pictures of Julius II. and Leo X. were praised; Velasquez's Innocent X. surpasses even the other two for the marvellous skill of its painting. We are told that the Pope was so well pleased with it that he paid the price with his own hand, an unprecedented honour.

On his return to Madrid, the post of Palace Marshal was added to that he had so long held of Court painter by his master, Philip. This new office necessitated much work, for it was one of heavy responsibilities, including the supervision of all the internal arrangements of the various palaces. But in spite of this, Velasquez, during the next nine years, the last of his life, painted some of his greatest masterpieces.

I will mention some of them only: first there is the picture called "The Maids of Honour," in reality, a portrait of the little Infanta, who, being probably a bad sitter, has been caught by the painter reflected in a large mirror; for in the picture we



## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

see not only the baby-Princess in her spreading hoop with her bending maids of honour, her dwarf and her big dog, but the artist himself, working at his canvas in his grave, lofty room, and the King and Queen, whose entrance is only shadowed in a mirror at the other end of the studio. Thus, the problem that Velasquez set himself to solve in this picture is no easy one, but the result is as perfect, in its way, as an "Adoration of the Magi" by an early Italian master, all centring round the figure of the little Princess, superb in her baby dignity.

Next, in the "Tapestry Weavers," we have an interior of great beauty, painted simply for the decoration of the palace walls, and showing the women at their work; one, a heroic figure, is winding her wool; another, her head wrapped up in a kerchief, is spinning, and a third holds back the folds of the heavy curtain. The picture differs entirely from the Dutch interiors of which you have been told, where the painter takes you, as it were, into the very room, and shows his sitters engaged at their ordinary occupations. These women, their room itself, have all been arranged by Velasquez to produce a great effect of concentrated light and shade, and we do not ask, for example, to what purpose the ladder is being put, as it leans against the wall; we only see how perfectly it cuts across the background, and adds to the beauty of its line. The picture is, in fact, a fine decorative work

## VELASQUEZ

of art of enormous interest, and different from any we have so far considered.

“The Coronation of the Virgin” was probably painted for the Queen’s Oratory. The Virgin is seated majestically on her throne-like cloud, nobly draped; above hovers the Third Person of the Trinity in the form of a dove; over her head the Crown is held by the two first Persons, God the Father and God the Son; beneath are Cherubim, lovely, winged children. The whole is full of dignity, but with its vivid blues and pinks and its conventional composition it is not typical of the genius of Velasquez.

The last portraits he ever painted were the little Infanta Margarita and her baby-brother Don Prosper, presents for their grandfather, the Emperor, at Vienna. This was the same little Infanta of the “Maids of Honour” picture, and another portrait of her is in the Louvre. Our illustration is taken from that in Vienna, and shows her a real little great lady with her fan and her jewels, standing royally erect, her small hand just resting on the low table beside her. There is an odd, charming contrast between her plump baby-face and the stiff black and white of her full Court dress, and from the whole composition Velasquez has woven a beautiful tissue of silver and ash-grey colour, just embroidered with pale rose.

As Palace Marshal he had a great piece of work

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

to do when, in 1660, Louis XIV. came to the Spanish frontier to claim his bride, the Infanta of Spain. Twenty-four halting-places had to be arranged for the royal travelling-party, and all the details of the reception of the bridegroom had to pass through the painter's hands. We are told how magnificently Velasquez played his part, busy everywhere in his silver-braided suit; but the exertion proved too much for him; he fell ill of an ague, and, already weakened by the fatigue and anxiety of the journey, he died just two months after the celebration of the marriage.

Velasquez was from the first a favourite of fortune. The country of his birth is a land of dry, stony foregrounds, vast, rolling plains, broad blue distances, and torn masses of clouds crossing the sky above the jagged mountain-tops. Nothing more harmonious can be imagined as a setting for his grand, solitary figures on horseback or on foot. To this natural advantage was added the happy circumstance of his early removal to Madrid. If he had remained painting in Seville, he, the most original and independent of men, would have found himself hampered and restrained on all sides by the dominance of the priests and by the hard and fast rules of an etiquette-loving people. But before he was twenty-four he was brought in contact with the young King of eighteen, and the ardent friendship between the two lasted with undiminished



THE INFANTA MARGARITA.

*From the painting by the Empress of Austria.*



## VELASQUEZ

force for thirty-six years, and was only closed by Velasquez's death.

Under Philip's powerful friendship, all doors were open to the artist : he could study pictures by the Italian masters in the royal galleries ; he was able to visit Rome and Venice as a person of importance ; daily in Madrid the King visited him in his studio, passing along secret galleries of the old Palace, hung with pictures.

As I have told you, Velasquez painted his master again and again, through all the developments of his art ; and, just as Rembrandt painted himself from youth to age, so did the Spaniard study his one constant model, keeping his vision always fresh, never allowing himself to become the slave of tradition, nor letting his senses grow dulled by repetition.

Velasquez never forgot that a picture must be a dignified piece of decoration. But he did not, like the old masters, compose his pictures as patterns, planned to cover a certain space. He conceived his designs in colour, leaving behind hardly any drawings of any kind ; then, having realized his figures, he set about giving them the backgrounds they needed, often adding to or altering his canvases until they gained the shape he required.

Space is one of his most valued means of expression in painting. More than half the picture in the "Maids of Honour" is filled with the dim emptiness of the lofty room in which he is seen working



## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

at his truly gigantic canvas. Yet the idea of proportion is perfectly observed, and satisfies our eyes. The sense of space given, and of figures seen in due relation the one to the other, is perhaps the reason why his pictures never arouse painful excitement, and are able to hold us to the end attentive to their charm. For Velasquez's art, always interesting, is never extravagant: a naturalness and a kind of sober dignity are their chief characteristics. His colour is sober too, severe and stately; black is used by him in a marvellously varied way; the whole colour-scheme as a rule gives the effect of cool, silvery light. He sees so profoundly that, in appearance, he can afford to be restrained.

In considering the work of painters up till now, you have seen how they, for the most part, derived from the traditions of those who came before them, handing on the torch of acquired knowledge to those who followed. This is not the case with Velasquez. All that is best and noblest in him is his alone; nor can it be said, though countless artists have studied his secrets, that any man after him has ever been inspired by the same genius. Each fresh picture that he painted was for him the occasion of a fresh effort, and he never avoided repeating the same subject, because his fertile brain at once enriched it with some new impression. In the light of his fine imaginative vision, nothing that he saw was mean or commonplace, and in his pictures Velasquez has dignified for ever the whole art of painting.

## CHAPTER III

### MURILLO (1617-1682).

MURILLO was born eighteen years later than Velasquez, and, like the greater master, at Seville. His parents were humble folk, and he began painting for his living at a very early age. There was at that time a great market for sacred pictures to be shipped off to the Spanish colonies in Mexico and Peru, and such pictures, often quite roughly executed, are still to be found on the walls of their old convents and churches. When Murillo had in this way got together a little sum of money, he set off for Madrid, with the idea of travelling later to study painting in Rome. He sought out his great fellow-townsmen, Velasquez, and was received by him with much kindness. The royal galleries were thrown open to him, and he copied industriously pictures by Van Dyck and Velasquez. We can see what a great influence these studies had upon him in one of his earliest pictures, "The Good Samaritan," which was painted with eleven others for the Franciscan Convent. In it he paints with a greater depth of shadow than he ever afterwards used. This series of pictures was not only greatly

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

admired, but it brought him many commissions, and his work improved so much that Velasquez urged him to set out for Rome. But Murillo shrank apparently from the perils of the journey, and instead, returned to Seville, married a lady of fortune, and began a prosperous career, founding finally the Academy of Painting in his native town.

From the moment of his return, Murillo began to paint in the style which we always now associate with his name ; his pictures are easy to understand, smooth and flowing in line, with faces painted, as a Spanish critic has said, "with blood and milk," so white and red are they. He was deeply religious, and his pictures represent his sincerest feelings, but to us many of them are spoiled by an overpowering sweetness. The Murillos in the National Gallery will show you what I mean ; take, for example, the young John Baptist, his arms round the Lamb. Murillo has painted a pretty peasant lad and a soft lamb from the flock, but the meaning of his subject could hardly be guessed without the inscription on the standard, "Behold the Lamb of God." "The Holy Family," again, painted in his old age, shows how he too often set the stage in his pictures and spoiled their undoubted charm by a theatrical over-prettness ; the Child Jesus, standing, one little hand in His Mother's, the other in S. Joseph's, is an entirely human child, in spite of His halo, and the delightful cherub-angels

## MURILLO

above Him only add to the gentle cheerfulness of the picture. In Hertford House you may see a "Virgin and Child" by Murillo, the Virgin in a very beautiful red robe ; in the Louvre is the well-known "Assumption of the Virgin," a large canvas, the Virgin standing erect on a crescent moon, surrounded by groups of charming baby-angels, of the same type as the cherubs in "The Holy Family" in the National Gallery.

Far more interesting is a set of six pictures illustrating the Parable of the Prodigal Son, now in a private collection in London. Two of them have been exhibited : the Prodigal Son living riotously, and his penitent return home. In the first he is wasting his substance at a feast on a tiled terrace with a background of columns and rich red curtains. A musician plays a guitar ; an attendant brings dishes. Fair ladies share the meal. In the distance is a charming landscape and a gateway leading into a park. In the second the aged father welcomes his son, who kneels, scantily clad, at his feet ; behind, the fatted calf of the parable is being led through a gateway. This second picture belonged at one time to the Pope, who had received it as a present from the Queen of Spain. The Pope sold it to an Englishman, who used to boast that he was one of the only purchasers from the Vatican in modern times.

Besides religious pictures, Murillo painted many studies of peasant boys, such as our "Boy Drinking"

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

in the National Gallery, and a group of boys in the Dulwich Gallery, merry little fellows, two sitting on the ground with their basket open for a picnic meal. A mulatto boy holds out his hand to beg a morsel ; behind them is a fine landscape of far-off hills, and in the sky are white, rolling clouds.

Murillo's last work was a "Marriage of S. Catherine," painted as an altar-piece for the Church of the Capucin Fathers in Cadiz. He had to mount a high scaffolding in order to finish the picture, after it had been put into its place above the altar. Unfortunately he slipped, and gave himself an internal injury from which he never recovered. At his death the picture was left unfinished, and it still hangs in the Church of the Capucins ; but the convent has been turned into a hospital.

Murillo was deeply mourned ; all the chief nobles of Seville attended his funeral, which was celebrated with great pomp amidst a sorrowing crowd of people from every rank. On his grave they laid a plain stone slab, on which his name was carved with a skeleton and the two words, "Vive Moriturus."



## CHAPTER IV

GOYA (1746-1828).

BEFORE leaving Spain I must tell you about a Spanish painter who belongs to a far later date than those you have already learnt to know. This was Goya, a man of strange, fiery passions and widely differing moods, who has been compared to a meteor flashing suddenly through a dark sky. Goya was born in Aragon some fifty years after Murillo's death. He began to paint while still very young, and lived for many years in Rome, working hard. When he returned to Spain he made Madrid his headquarters, and at first earned his living by painting designs for tapestries. Many of these designs may still be seen at the Prado Gallery. He became a member of the Academy of San Fernando, and was made in time Court painter to the King. The Queen, Maria Louisa, a Bourbon Princess, was his friend as well as his patron, and so, too, was the Duchess of Alba, a celebrated beauty of the time, whose portrait by him is in a private collection in England. It represents a slender lady in a full white muslin dress with very black hair, much frizzed and falling over her shoulders. She



## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

has red corals round her neck, and a red sash round her slim waist. He has painted her little fluffy dog too, with a smart pink bow on his hind-leg. Goya used to praise this picture highly, and the same lady sat to him on many different occasions. His portrait of the Queen is now in Madrid—a coarse-looking woman in a round beaver hat, wearing riding-breeches, and sitting astride her horse as ladies ride nowadays.

Goya became the favourite painter of the fashionable world, and ninety portraits by him at least are known to exist in private houses in Madrid. He was able to buy a beautiful villa in the neighbourhood of the town, where he saw much company. He painted pictures, too, for various churches and convents, but it is not in such works that the peculiar genius of his art is best shown. Indeed, the Church, of whose influence on Spanish art I have told you, inspired Goya on the whole with mockery, and he even parodied the doings of the Inquisition, and caricatured monks and nuns with a merciless wit. He was an engraver too, and has left a whole series of “caprichos,” as he called them: fanciful pictures, in which he satirized passionately avarice and greed, the horrors of war, the cruelties of the Inquisitors, the malpractices of lawyers, doctors, and priests. He lived, as you see by his dates, all through the troublous times of the French Revolution, and he made a whole series of sketches illustrating the

## GOYA

French invasion of Spain and its accompanying terrors. All that he saw during the war only served to increase his bitter hatred of tyranny and oppression. After the Battle of Salamanca, the Duke of Wellington, being for a while in Madrid, sat for his portrait to Goya, who has given us the most living picture we possess of the great general.

In the National Gallery we have a fine portrait by Goya of Dr. Péral, who sits in a straight-backed wooden chair, looking sombrely at the spectator with thin, slightly parted lips. He wears a grey satin coat and a waistcoat, flowered and faintly striped. The face is a haunting one, full of suffering, but strong too, self-controlled, and proudly intellectual. Another masterly portrait is in a private collection in France. The whole spirit of the Revolution is in the proud, reckless face of this Don Ramon Satue. It is dated 1823, so it must have been painted when Goya was seventy-five, just before he left Spain to live the last few years of his life in France. He settled in Bordeaux, and busied himself in making a lithograph series of "The Bulls of Bordeaux," showing his genius still fresh and vigorous. He died in Bordeaux, and more than seventy years later his countrymen brought his remains back to Spain, and he was buried in Madrid.

Our illustration is taken from a picture in the Prado, "The Game of Blind Man's Buff." The lady facing us to the extreme left of the picture is

## THE SPANISH PAINTERS

dressed in much the same fashion as the Duchess of Alba. The group is charmingly composed, and the landscape is very pleasing. The game is played by the side of a quiet lake ; the atmosphere is full of light, softly diffused under a cloudy sky.

In looking at Goya's pictures we are often puzzled, because he is an unequal painter, sometimes extraordinarily good, sometimes almost commonplace. He was free and independent in his opinions, refusing to be bound by any conventions. He painted best the people who amused him most, and therefore his portraits show more cleverness than love of human beings. He was like Hogarth, because he hated cruelty and stupidity, and knew how to express this hatred honestly ; but he was greater than Hogarth in the way he set to work to expose this cruelty. He painted his people as he saw them, and that was part of his honesty ; but he cannot be compared to such a painter as Rembrandt, because he did not care enough about life itself to paint tenderly and patiently those who had suffered ; he was too angry with those who had caused the suffering, and that often gives an almost terrifying force to his pictures. You see he really was, as I said before, a kind of bright meteor, making himself known by flashes of light, not burning with steady radiance like a planet.



MOSCA. CIECA.

By Goya in the Prado, Madrid.)

Anderson.



## PART VII

# FRENCH PAINTERS

### CHAPTER I

CLOUET (1510-1572).

THE first great national painter of France is Clouet. Before his time it is difficult to decide which of the still-existing pictures are by French and which by Flemish artists. You remember first among the Flemish artists the names of Hubert and Jan van Eyck, and how they worked at Bruges and Ghent, and introduced new methods of painting, and had a following of artists who spread this new oil-painting far and wide. Their work came to France, too, the more so since France, being torn asunder at the time by wars and internal dissensions, had no actual school of painting itself. It was only in quiet places such as convent libraries that artists could pursue their labours undisturbed ; hence France is especially rich in illustrated manuscripts, with their treasures of delicate painting, showing Flemish



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influence, but painted surely in many instances by French hands.

Up to the end of the fifteenth century religious art still held the upper hand in France, but with the sixteenth century the art of portrait-painting became of the first importance. You may remember that about this time Holbein became Court painter to Henry VIII., and had to paint pictures of the ladies whom the King intended to honour with offers of marriage. This was one of the duties of the Court painters of the day. Schemes for marrying royal personages suitably occupied, as history tells us, the subtlest brains in Europe; and as journeys were both slow and dangerous, painters would be dispatched to show intending brides and bridegrooms of royal descent each other's portraits. Thus an immense responsibility rested on their shoulders. Supposing the marriage had been successfully concluded, there would be pictures of the children to be painted for the far-away royal grandparents to see and admire. You remember Velasquez painted the royal children of Spain to be sent to their grandfather's Court at Vienna.

Such an artist was François Clouet, whose father Jean (sometimes called Janet) had been in the employ of François I., and had risen to the position of first Court painter. He was named at the same time the King's "valet de chambre," which shows that the artist was still considered in the light of a

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royal body-servant. The office was evidently not considered of any great importance, for no record is given of Janet's death. His son apparently inherited the position without a break, and by 1540 was mentioned as being Court painter, with the same salary as his father. So quietly did the two Clouets live that their names were in danger of being forgotten, and up to quite recent times their work was generally given to Holbein. But with greater knowledge of the subject, the Clouets have come into their own again, and no fewer than three hundred drawings by them have been named and classified, and are to be seen in that ancient treasure-house of the Orléans family at Chantilly, now the summer residence of the President of the French Republic.

We know that François Clouet was born at Tours, and also that his father Jean must have been of foreign origin, because a document exists in which François I. allows the son to inherit the property left by his father at death, although by the law of that day a foreigner's goods lapsed after death to the Crown. This is another example of the generosity of François I. to artists, and, indeed, Clouet the younger was fortunate in his master, for the King was enthusiastic in his love of art, critical in his appreciation, and magnificent in his rewards. In 1546 Clouet found a colleague in his office of Court painter in Limousin, who is chiefly known

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nowadays by the famous Limoges enamel, which he designed, and of which many beautiful examples still exist.

Clouet's method of painting portraits was, like Titian, to make rapid sketches of his royal sitters, which he worked up into finished pictures afterwards. This accounts for the large number of drawings left by him and his father. It is probably the reason why, as a rule, his drawings are so far better than his oil-paintings. He is perhaps best of all as a painter of miniatures, and he has left a Charles IX. (now in Vienna) and a Mary Stuart (at Windsor) which are perfect examples of his art.

Our illustration is from a charming picture in the Louvre, the portrait of Elizabeth, the Austrian Princess who became Queen of France and the wife of Charles IX., a King of evil fame to us, because it was by his commands that, on S. Bartholomew's Day, 1574, all the Protestants in Paris were treacherously murdered. The picture shows us the young Queen richly tricked out with all the artifices of her day—high ruff, jewel-embroidered dress covered with knots and spider-webs, slashed sleeves, a net of pearls in her hair, and clear, flat stones ornamenting her hands and bodice. Her face is a characteristic example of Clouet's type: she has the good brown eyes, the tender expression, the faintly golden hair, and the pale complexion with amber tints in it, that, in varying degrees, we see in all of his charming royal ladies.



PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH OF AUSTRIA.  
(After the picture by François Clouet in the Louvre.)



## CHAPTER II

FRENCH art is bound up with the history of France as a nation. When we were learning about Italian art, it was never of Italy as a whole that we thought. Their artists were the special glory of the cities in which they worked, and their fame was universal. French art developed differently ; it reflected always its own national customs, and grew out of its own individual needs.

It was in the time of Louis XIV., France's "Roi Soleil," that the flame of national pride burnt the most steadily, and during his long reign, from 1643 to 1715, French art flourished and began to adapt itself vigorously to the ideals of splendour and magnificence, fostered by Louis and his Court. Religion played little part in this side of French life, and no great artists devoted themselves to the production of altar-pieces or sacred pictures for the decoration of their churches. But there was a ceaseless demand for pictures, suitable both in size and subject, to adorn the fronts of costly cabinets, the tops of harpsichords, the walls, ceilings, and chimneypieces of salons and boudoirs. Beautiful examples of these decorative pictures still exist, and in judging them,



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you must remember that such pictures were never meant to hang in picture-galleries in solid gilded frames: they were planned to follow the architectural lines of the rooms they adorned, to surmount doors, to fill in panels, to become part of the graceful scheme of surrounding objects, including even the gardens. Such rooms standing in just such surroundings you can still see hung with pictures by Watteau in the palace of Sans Souci at Potsdam, near Berlin.

When the French Revolution came, it swept away the old order of things in art, no less than in politics. French ideals turned away from royal pomp to the austerity of the ancient democrats of Rome, as the Jacobins imagined them; and since the French are the most logical of people, they carried out this rage for simplicity in their clothes, in the furniture of their houses, and of course in their pictorial art. You will see these developments in the work of the different artists I have chosen for you to consider.

### WATTEAU (1684-1721).

Greatest of all the painters in the reign of Louis XIV. is Watteau, the poet of eighteenth-century France. His genius came to surprise a world that had never before seen such fairy-like pictures, such painted kingdoms of love and enchantment. There is a portrait of Watteau as a

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young man, gaunt and nervous, with large dark eyes, long thin nose, sickly-looking and sad; later portraits of him tell the same tale: he looked an old man at thirty, his eyes were sunken, his face hollowed by ill-health under the heavy curled wig of the period, which framed oddly his high forehead. He was born in the east of France, at Valenciennes, a town formerly Flemish, which had become French only six years before Watteau's birth. His father was a tiler, but Watteau determined early to be a painter. He left his father's house and came to Paris, very poor and quite friendless. He earned his living by copying pictures for a shopkeeper, who made him work hard for him all day in a miserable attic.

Luckily, this did not last long. Watteau met an artist, Gillot, who loved to paint the figures taken from the Italian Comedy, then so popular in France, Pantaloon and Harlequin, those curious masks, invented at Bergamo, who in the eighteenth century became popular throughout all Europe. Gillot took the young man into his house, and taught him to engrave illustrations for books, in which he quickly made such progress that he attracted the notice of a second master, Audran, Keeper of the Luxembourg Palace, a scene-painter for the Opera, who had learnt his business by studying the designs made by Raphael for the adornment of the walls of the Vatican. As I have said, this was a time when houses were treated as works of art, and under his

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new master, Watteau learnt how to paint on white or gold backgrounds; he learnt also something of far greater importance, for working with Audran, he lived in the Luxembourg, and thus had free access to the masterpieces of Rubens, now in the Louvre, which were then housed in the palace across the Seine. Watteau knew Rubens already, for as a boy he would have seen his paintings in the churches of his Flemish home, but he had never before seen him in all his splendour, and his work thus intimately studied exercised the greatest influence over the young painter. The natural surroundings of the palace of the Luxembourg played their part too in his development, for in those stately gardens under those tall trees and resting on those smooth lawns, he could observe at his leisure the effect of the play of light and shade on the waving branches and on the little groups of people enjoying the air in shady places; all things he cared supremely to render in colour, when he came to paint what really pleased him.

Watteau's first pictures were painted definitely to earn his daily bread, and they were not garden-scenes. At his old home in Valenciennes he had often seen the French troops passing on their way to join the army on the frontier, and his first pictures were two such little scenes from the life of these marching regiments, one of soldiers setting out on their march, the other of soldiers halting for

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their midday rest; two pictures remarkable for their delicate observation, their harmony, and sense of colour. He sold them both, and the money for one alone was enough to pay for his journey home, to see his old parents and to show them his prosperity.

On his return to Paris he was ambitious to gain the Prix de Rome, the prize founded by Louis XIV., providing money to send poor artists to Rome to study painting. Watteau competed in 1709, but his picture was placed second, and the chance was lost, for that year, at any rate. He hoped, however, to gain the favour of the Academicians, his judges, for another year, by showing them more of his work, and he placed two of his soldier-scenes in their ante-room, where they could not fail to see them as they passed. The plan was successful in an unexpected manner. The pictures so delighted the Academicians that they then and there elected Watteau a member of their Academy.

Fortune began to smile upon him in other ways; he found favour with a new patron, who, in the fashion of those days, took him into his own house and surrounded him with every luxury. This Monsieur Cruzat was a man of wealth and taste, the possessor of many treasures of art, especially of drawings and sketches by the old masters; by Rubens, for example, Van Dyck and Titian. Studying them, Watteau fostered his love for beautiful textures, fine architecture and leafy trees. He worked much from his own

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sketch-books, in which he was accustomed to note down anything that pleased his eye, some chance attitude of grace in a woman, as she stood or sat, some happy fall of her silken skirts as she moved. When he composed his pictures, he went to his books, and took from them the figures that he needed.

His health continued delicate, he tired easily, even of his friends; he moved constantly from one house to another, disappointed his patrons, and delayed five years before he sent to the Academy the picture which should gain him full membership in that body. He was given the title of "Peintre du Roi," and a new title, made expressly for him, "Peintre des Fêtes Galantes," yet his friends noticed how little he cared for his new honours. He worked harder, but more erratically than ever, and would often paint out a picture that had failed to satisfy his ideals, even though offered a good price for it. In his restlessness, he made the long journey to London, to consult, as some think, Dr. Mead, the famous physician of that day. English doctors were supposed to know more than most about his complaint, consumption, because it was so prevalent in that land of fogs. Some of these details we learn from his friend, the picture-dealer Gersaint, for whose shop Watteau painted the well-known sign-board, a charming picture of an eighteenth-century picture-shop, with the pictures hanging temptingly on the walls, and the customers in their spreading



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hoops examining them at the counter. Watteau was living at Gersaint's house when his illness gained such a hold upon him that his friend sought for him a home in the country, at Nogent near Vincennes, and there he died after much suffering, aged only thirty-seven. The good *curé* of the village visited him in his sickness, and we are told how Watteau, trained in appreciation of beauty, turned away his head from the rough crucifix held up to him, and spent the last days of his life painting the *curé* a picture of the Crucifixion that should be more worthy of his Master.

The greatest of all Watteau's pictures is in the Louvre, the "Embarkation for Cythera," the very picture painted after such long delay for his Academy membership. Here you may see with what magic skill he paints a landscape all transfigured with sunshine, where the joyous travellers in their tenderly coloured dresses are hastening, before the setting of the sun, to embark in the ship, whose sails are already spread, gallantly, for the voyage.

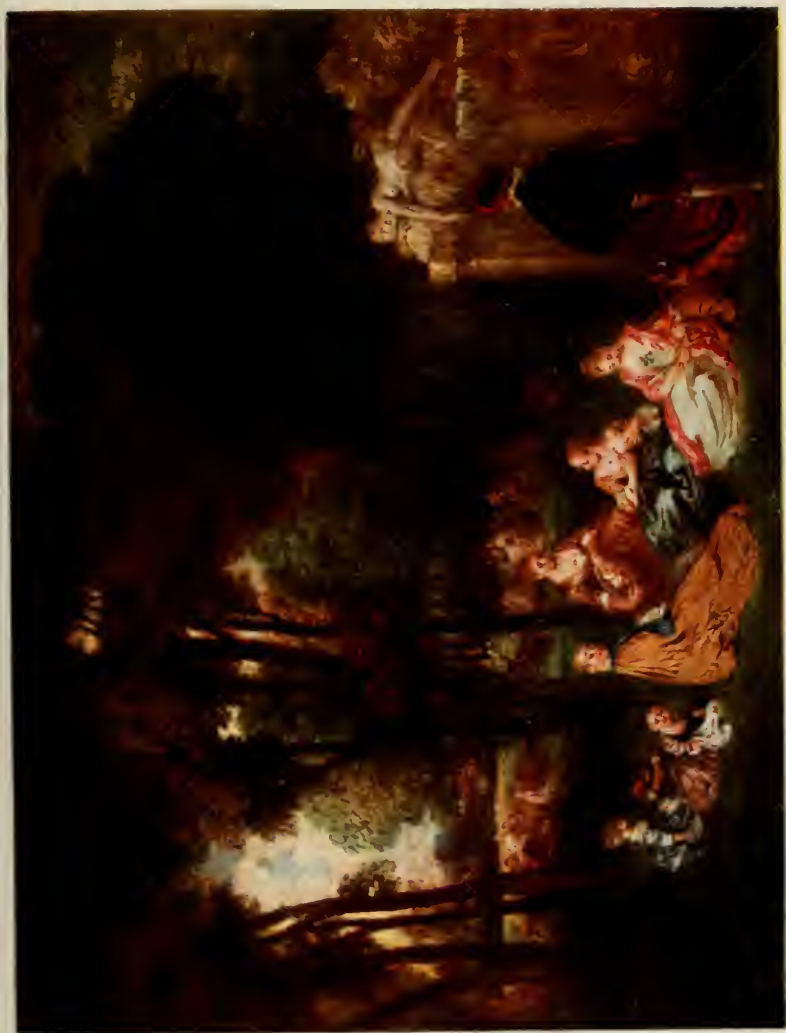
We are fortunate to have in London many beautiful Watteaus all hanging together in one gallery, in Hertford House. Our illustration gives you a little idea of the charm of one of them, "The Champs Elysées"; but you must, if possible, see for yourselves in the original picture the romantic glamour which Watteau, better than any other



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artist, knows how to throw over such a scene. His ladies, in their exquisite clothes, sit circle-wise on the grass. Two other circles are seen in the distance, and one of children playing with a dog forms a fourth. This manner of grouping is characteristic of Watteau, and is probably the outcome of the so-called "Rococo" fashion of the day, which in architecture and every kind of decoration preferred the rounded, or shell-like shape, to the square. The man in the short cloak with his back to us and his averted face is supposed to be Watteau, who often painted himself thus, a spectator at the feast. The marble group behind him repeats the idea carried out by the graceful revellers below, all touched with a delicate languor, reposing under the waving branches of those tall trees.

Just so, in the "Embarkation" in the Louvre, you see the rose-wreathed bust of Venus smiling in marble at the lovers' flight. Through the tree-tops you get glimpses of the sky, attracting the eyes upwards, and thus increasing the apparent height of the picture. The world in which these delicately dressed men and women laugh and chatter softly and make love and exchange posies is a secure and beautiful one ; but behind them clouds are brewing, never far from the horizon. It is as if the brooding storm-clouds of the Revolution were already threatening these fortunate people in their sheltered gardens, and Watteau, sur-



THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES.  
(After the picture by Watteau in the Wallace Collection.)



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veying them, seems to say : "The day has been perfect, but there will be rain before nightfall."

In the Dulwich Gallery is another of these *Fêtes Galantes*, "The Colonnade," so beautiful that it will repay you to go and see that one picture alone. In the garden, under high, carven pillars, guests are seated in the calm of a summer evening, the gallants in little cloaks of red or blue, the ladies in dresses of striped or shining satin, looking on, while to the sound of mandolines two dancers pace a stately minuet. The ladies wave their fans to the music ; the fountain splashes like a tall white column against the trees beyond. As you look you find yourself in Watteau's world—spacious, beautiful, and a little sad.

Only two years ago the National Gallery was enriched by the gift of "The Scale of Love," a picture painted by Watteau at about the same date as his famous "Embarkation." In the centre a man in a silk suit of pale rose-colour plays the guitar ; a lady at his feet holds some music and looks up at him, showing us the outline of her cheek only. She wears red-violet and brown-rose. Both dresses, you see, are harmonies and variations on the theme of rose-colour. The trees are autumnal, russet in hue, and on a pedestal is the bust of a bearded man, looking on with almost sinister intention. Here, as always, Watteau seems dreaming of some world

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better than the real one, although in the painting of those enchanted gardens of his he has been, and will always remain, unsurpassed.

LANCRET (1690-1743).

Lancret is the best known of the many artists who followed in Watteau's footsteps; but in his work we see the Frenchman alone, untouched by the wistfulness which ran in the Flemish blood of the greater painter. He was a man who, in spite of his humble birth—his father was a cab-driver—absorbed to the full the gay, sparkling life of his native Paris, and had no other thought than to reproduce it in all its careless charm. Lancret's brother was an engraver, and, as his brother's pupil, the boy began to follow his profession; but he became soon conscious of his own powers, and encouraged by Watteau, he went into the country and sketched there from nature. He painted two pictures, which won for him the membership of the Academy, and he became in his turn the "*Peintre des Fêtes Galantes*." His pictures were even mistaken for Watteau's, and the elder painter, vexed at the rapid success of the younger, broke with him, and a quarrel followed, which alienated the two men for ever. Lancret was an industrious, methodical worker, never turning aside from the path he had traced out for himself. In this he differed widely



CAMARGO DANCING.

(After the picture by *Lamot* in the *Huisaer* Collection.)





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from Watteau, whose life was spent in a restless seeking after higher ideals.

The one diversion which Lancret allowed himself was the opera, and he painted many pictures of the best-known dancers of his day. Perhaps the most charming is the picture of Madame Camargo, now in Hertford House. You see it reproduced in our illustration. The dancer is dressed in the full satin skirt of the period, short enough, however, to show her tripping feet. The dress is wreathed with roses, she wears a big blue bow on one shoulder, and a rose is tucked into the lightly waved hair of her small, closely dressed head. Notice the long limbs of the dancer. Lancret always exaggerated gracefully the height of his figures. Even the boy with the drum and fife, beating the measure to the dance, has a length of limb more in keeping with Lancret's sense of beauty than with reality. The summer sky above, the distant blue of the landscape, the flowery grove where the fiddlers sit, all make up a scene of careless enjoyment, with no hint here of sorrow to come.

In the Louvre are four pictures by Lancret, representing the four seasons of the year, probably painted to decorate the walls of the Château de la Muette: "Spring" is symbolized by flowers and music and a landscape, through which runs a little river, with a huntsman spreading his net to catch birds. "Summer" is an open-air dance, in the

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background reapers tying the sheaves of corn. "Autumn" is a picnic scene ; the donkey has carried the provisions, a peasant girl is bringing a basket with more contributions to the feast, the grapes in the vineyards behind are ripe for the vintage. "Winter" is a skating-party ; only the men are skating in the misty landscape, the ladies, their hands in their deep muffs, are looking on at the pretty sight.

There are four little pictures in the National Gallery, a series too, "The Four Ages of Man." In the first, "Infancy," the children play under an open colonnade ; two of them are dragging a third in her little go-cart, harnessed by long ribbons. In the second, "Youth," a girl is dressing in an ante-room opening through an arch on the garden beyond ; long yellow curtains hang at the windows ; a young gallant in pink holds a mirror to the girl. In the third, "Manhood," a group of men shoot at a mark ; one man is in a suit of pinky-gold, another all in golden yellow. The fourth, "Age," are old peasant-folk, who sit quietly spinning or sleeping before the cottage-door. All four pictures are distinguished by the clear, silvery tone in which they are painted.

Lancret did not live to be old : some say his too close application to his work shortened his life. He died, as he had lived, in Paris, the city of his affection.

## CHAPTER III

CHARDIN (1699-1779).

WE now come to a far greater name, Chardin, the man who raised the study of what we generally call "still life" to the highest possible plane. His father was a well-known cabinet-maker who designed billiard-tables for Louis XV., and naturally wished his son to continue earning his living in the same fashion. He allowed his boy, however, to enter an artist's studio, where for some time Chardin contented himself with copying pictures. It was by chance only that he began his life's work of painting the things around him as he saw them. An artist named Coypel came one day to the studio, to get one of the pupils to paint a gun into the picture of a sportsman he was just then engaged upon. Chardin noticed how carefully Coypel placed the gun to be copied, so that the light should fall rightly upon it, and as he set himself to reproduce the effect, he got an inspiration which never afterwards left him: the knowledge that the question of light falling on the things around us is the real problem of every picture. His first original work was a signboard, which a barber-

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surgeon ordered from him for his shop. Chardin had certainly seen Watteau's signboard hanging outside Gersaint's shop, and he painted on a board fourteen feet wide a whole scene, illustrating a surgeon's activities in those days. A wounded man has been brought straight from a duel to the surgeon's door, and there he is being tended by the good man for a sword-cut in his thigh. The invalid has been stripped to the waist, and the picture is treated most realistically. When finished, Chardin hung it over the shop one night, unknown to the owner, who, coming out early the next morning, was surprised to see the street thronged with people admiring his signboard. This was the beginning of Chardin's career.

Seven years after Watteau's death, Chardin painted picture of a fish, "The Skate," so marvellously that he was at once elected to the Academy. A number of his pictures are to be seen in the Louvre, for he painted everything that pleased him in the gracious, comfortable world of middle-class Parisians, amongst whom he lived, and everything that he painted is good to contemplate. He painted what used to be called "Trophies of the Chase," hares, rabbits, partridges, suggestive of the kitchen, where they were to be daintily cooked ; he painted fruit with its distinctive colour, its bloom, all the delicate details of peach and grape and melon, lying on their flowered dishes of Dresden china, or in bowls of

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silver, richly embossed. He painted olives too, all silvery-green, and fat bottles of wine or oil, and everywhere the glory of reflected light revealing to us the poetry which too often lies hidden from us in the common objects of our everyday life. He painted kitchen utensils, and cutlets even, just ready for cooking, or a few simple things grouped to form a perfect work of art, such as a glass of water, a handful of nuts, or perhaps two pinks, distilling by his marvellous art the whole essence of the flowers, the living miracle of their beauty.

But Chardin painted figures also, those fine, vigorous housewives, and their maidservants and little children, whom he knew well, occupied as he saw them day by day in their busy, cheerful lives. He shows you the mistress of the house in her kitchen, washing the vegetables for her soup, or returning from market, her carefully chosen leg of mutton in the basket on her arm ; or she is busy with her washing, or in her wine-cellar. She is perhaps at her happiest with her children, teaching her little girl to sew, while she winds her wool to knit the strong blue stockings that look so well with her high-heeled shoes of soft-coloured brocade ; or she is putting on her little boy's three-cornered hat, before he starts for school, his books under his arm. Chardin's women, with their quiet eyes, in their charming fresh dresses and large aprons, their hair neatly brushed away under clean



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white caps, have a way of doing quite ordinary things cheerfully and well, which teaches us more than lessons learned from books of the beauty of everyday life lived thus with dignity, order, and grace. The picture on the cover of this book shows us one such woman; it is the "Grace before Meals," the "Bénédicté" of the Louvre. The mother stands before the pewter tureen of steaming soup, repeating the sacred words to her child, who, seated demurely in her tall chair, folds her hands reverently in prayer. All the details show Chardin's skill, the brazier with the light playing on its copper surface, the folds of the ample, coarse tablecloth, the graceful stripe of the stuff on the backs of the comfortable chairs. Over all is an atmosphere of peace, and, knowing how near the fierce times of the Revolution are drawing, we wonder, and hope that the lives of these righteous people may have saved them from destruction in that Reign of Terror.

Chardin married at the age of thirty-two. His wife, always sickly, died after a few years, and he did not find it easy to make a good living out of his pictures, which, largely on account of their subjects, were not popular with the rich patrons of the day. Foreign lovers of art appreciated them better than the Parisians. In Vienna, in Sweden, in far-off Russia, princely and royal personages bought his pictures for their galleries, and Chardin remained

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content with the prices he had fixed when he first began to paint. Fortunately, his second marriage brought him not only a clever, sympathetic wife, but also her little fortune, which helped him to live free from care in the modest way he preferred. Modesty is, indeed, the keynote to Chardin's character. He compared himself in his work to a coasting-steamer, only touching at the outlying ports of the island of art. He carried this honesty and simplicity with him to the end of his long life. Sometimes the indifference of the critics to his work would sadden him for a time, but the work itself was always a refreshment to him, and his wife's tender devotion was his solace to the last. There is a portrait of him, painted by himself, in the Louvre, showing us exactly how he must have looked in his old age. He wears a handkerchief tied round his head, a shade over his eyes, and heavily framed spectacles on his nose. It is the face of a worker, of one who, as he said of himself, had to take an infinity of trouble over each picture, but who never spared himself, so happy was he in the knowledge of his art thus steadily amassed.

Not many years ago the National Gallery bought one of Chardin's pictures, "La Fontaine." A woman, dressed in the striped skirt, jacket, and blue apron which old-fashioned servants still wear in remote country places in France, is drawing water from the "fontaine," or large copper vessel in which

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the water was kept before the days of water-pipes. You will notice the various cooking utensils kept in this back-kitchen or scullery. One "still-life" picture is to be seen there, too, painted when Chardin was fifty-five years old. It is only a black bottle, a glass half-filled with red wine, a loaf of bread, and a knife ready to cut it—just the materials for the homeliest meal, but a good example of the beauty with which he invests the simplest gifts of God.

## CHAPTER IV

BOUCHER (1703-1770).

BOUCHER is an artist who differs entirely from Chardin. His work interests us in a different way also. He represents the eighteenth century, but not the world of real people in whose society Chardin lived and painted. He represents rather the ideals of those courtiers who moved like satellite stars around the sun, their King. Louis XIV. had little love for truth, least of all in art. His ideals were all for pomp and dignity and a kind of sublime etiquette. When, in 1715, he was succeeded by Louis XV. there was a great lessening of dignity, but no greater love of truth. Pleasure was the one aim of all at the Court. The courtiers surrounded themselves with everything that was refined, charming, and elegant. Prettiness was their idol, and the chief painter who could supply them with such prettiness in his pictures was Boucher.

Boucher's father was a painter in a small way, but with taste enough to apprentice his promising son to a competent artist, a man named Lemoine, who was a theatrical scene-painter, making admirable scenery for the classical operas of the period.

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This kind of painting was good practice for Boucher, who filled up his spare hours with painting saints and Madonnas for sale outside the church-doors, and with engraving little illustrations for breviaries. He became in time a well-known engraver, and was chosen to finish the greater part of the studies left by Watteau at his death. He was a quick worker, and gained his living easily, making time in his busy day to paint independently as well.

In 1724 he won the Prix de Rome, which Watteau (to his eternal regret,) had missed. We do not know much about Boucher's time in Rome, except that he found Raphael's pictures "insipid" and Michelangelo's figures "deformed"; so the prize appears to have been wasted upon him, and, having fallen into ill-health there, he returned, before his time in Rome was over, to Paris. There he married a pretty young girl, who excelled in making small copies of her husband's pictures, and with this marriage in 1733 his time of prosperity began. He exhibited pictures every year, and painted chiefly mythological subjects, in which he represented, not the austere gods of Greece, but the pretty, smiling, flower-decked deities of the later Roman legends. There are many of his pictures in the Louvre, and the titles tell how thoroughly he exploited mythological personages in his choice of subjects; for in them you see Diana leaving her bath with her attendant nymphs, Venus ordering battle-arms from Vulcan, Venus at her



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toilet, the Three Graces, and so on. He painted adorable Cupids—curly, dimpled little fellows, tumbling about in the clouds, hovering mischievously round Venus, their mother, playing even at the knees of the Muses.

Boucher painted country idylls too, but his country was a fairy place, where the peasants seemed to have lost their way from the stage of the Opera, and the shepherds danced with shepherdesses in satins and ribbons, high-heeled shoes on their feet, and flowers on their crooks. His landscapes have no dream-like charm such as Watteau gives us, but they are as pretty as possible, with tinkling streams and mossy banks and marble ruins. You see such subjects over and over again in his designs for tapestries, the factories for which had lately been revived, and there you will see, too, farmyard scenes, with charmingly thatched barns, mill-wheels, pigeon-houses, all grouped in elegant confusion on the wide canvases. Living things animate the pretty scene—birds in flight, flurried sheep, barking dogs: all is alive and gay and full of cheerful movement. The word "picturesque," which I have never had to use before, best describes Boucher's work, and since the idea of utilizing familiar scenes in this attractively artificial manner was new and pleasing, his popularity became enormous.

Besides designing tapestries, Boucher decorated



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rooms. These decorations have mostly perished with the houses they adorned, but a few years ago one existed still in Paris. The description of it reads like a fairy-story, for the walls were covered with a painted trellis of roses, revealing vistas of river-banks, pink flamingoes, gorgeous peacocks, and rare birds, gay with delicate plumage. Doves were flying overhead, and, of course, Cupids too—tricksy darlings, spurting the water from a fountain through their half-closed fingers.

Boucher worked at his easel ten hours a day. His head teemed with ideas ; life was not long enough for all he planned to do. Nothing was too large for him, nor too small. He painted tiny scenes of great perfection on the tiniest objects—fans, watch-cases, ostrich-eggs, china cups, panels for ladies' coaches. In addition, he carried on actively his earlier work for the stage, and as late as 1743 we hear of an opera for which he painted the backgrounds. Later still he designed the scenery for a Chinese fête ; Chinese decorations were the rage under Louis XV. For his was the true kingdom of Rococo—a word originally used only for a style in architecture, but later employed to signify that eighteenth-century decoration, where shells and flowers predominate, and prettiness in design takes the place of nobility of line.

Another large class of Boucher's pictures represents scenes taken from everyday life. Our illustration



LE DÉJEUNER.

(After the picture by Boucher in the Louvre.)



## BOUCHER

is a good example of this class, and is from a picture painted by him in 1763, only seven years before his death. Notice the prettiness of the room in which the children are breakfasting. Over the mirror hangs a little painting, and you see the familiar shell of the Rococo period. There is a Chinese tray of red lacquer on the polished table, and the shelves on each side of the mirror are of lacquer too. The little girl with her doll wears a cap like the child saying grace in the Chardin picture. The doll is dressed in a full hoop like a grown-up lady, but the woolly sheep on the stand is very like the toy sheep in our shops to-day. Boucher was a great lover of pretty things brought from China and the East—treasures which he kept in his studio, and loved to show to his friends when they visited him.

There is one Boucher in the National Gallery, "Pan and Syrinx." The pastoral god steals up behind the nymph, Syrinx, and her companion, who lie stretched out safe from the heat of the sun in the river-bed. Water-weeds and flowers surround them, and above hover, as usual, two sportive Cupids. The clear water flows from a classic vase on which Syrinx rests her arm. In Hertford House are three pictures by Boucher, one the portrait of the famous Madame de Pompadour of the Court of Louis XV., a great patron of the painter's talent, and a woman of much taste and cultivation. All three pictures were in her own collection.

## FRENCH PAINTERS

Boucher was the Director of the Gobelins, where the tapestries were woven. He was also "Premier Peintre du Roi." He had probably an official residence in the Louvre, for it was there, after much suffering from asthma, that he died at the age of sixty-seven. On his easel was found a picture that he had just begun as a present to his doctor.

## CHAPTER V

DAVID (1748-1825).

DAVID was taken as a young man to Boucher's studio, and followed his profession by his advice ; but never were two artists more dissimilar. David's father was a small tradesman, and after his early death in a duel, the boy was brought up by an uncle, an architect. To David, the young man full of the new ideas afloat in France on the eve of the great Revolution, Boucher's work seemed affected, stale, and absurdly over-elaborate. In 1775 David gained the Prix de Rome, and he lived in Italy for five years. About ten years before his arrival, Winckelmann, the German who of all men had most reformed critical opinions on art and literature, had died tragically, murdered on a journey at a small inn for the sake of the valuable antique coins he carried. But in Rome his influence was still paramount, and effected a sudden, violent change in the young Frenchman, himself a seeker after truth ; for Winckelmann had possessed the key which first unlocked the hidden treasures of antiquity for those who, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, had grown weary of the surface smoothness of the



## FRENCH PAINTERS

times. He had begun to unearth the towns of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and had discovered the buried cities which had lain there so many hundred years, safe covered up in the fallen lava from Vesuvius. He had written inspiringly about them, and about the earlier marvels of Greek art. His enthusiasm had awaked a kind of second Renaissance, originating, like the first, in Italy. David, young and impressionable, drank of this new knowledge—a thirsty man at a pure fountain; and, under this inspiration, he painted pictures so different from those of his predecessors that their immediate success appears to us a miracle as great in the world of art as the outbreak of the Revolution in the world of politics.

You will remember how Boucher's titles showed us with what sentimental ideals his pictures were planned; so David, true to his new inspiration, forsook mythological fables of gods and goddesses, and painted stern Roman stories, teaching the Parisians how blind Belisarius, brave and loyal leader of Justinian's armies, but fallen under the ban of imperial displeasure, begged his bread in his captivity, calling to the passers-by: "Give an obolus to Belisarius, who rose by merit, and was cast down by envy." This was the first of David's pictures to be exhibited in Paris. His second, the father of the Horatii blessing his sons before the combat, was painted after he had become member

## DAVID

of the Academy and "Peintre du Roi," and was a commission from his master, Louis XVI.

But David's principles led him to forsake his master, and avenge the tyrannies, under which France had groaned so long, on that almost innocent scapegoat, Louis XVI. In the famous Jacobin Club, the headquarters of the Revolutionists, David worked actively for the cause of freedom, and when the members of the Convention were chosen, who were to hold the reins of a patriotic Government, David held a foremost place, with the title of official painter. You will know enough about the French Revolution and its crimes to realize how far the French patriots were from carrying out their ideals ; but underlying the lust for power and the cruelty which grew up with it, there was an ardent desire for purity in political life, and as an incitement they sought, often most ignorantly, to revive the habits and customs of the mighty days of Republican Greece and Rome. Marat and Robespierre were both intimate friends and associates of David, and, after Robespierre's fall, he ceased to occupy himself actively with politics, and was even for a time imprisoned in the Luxembourg, employing his enforced leisure with painting the "Sabine Women," now in the Louvre. But with the coming of Napoleon into power, David was at once raised to an important position, for Napoleon cared much for art, and knew the wisdom of en-

## FRENCH PAINTERS

couraging artists among his new subjects. David was named "Peintre de l'Empereur," and in this capacity he painted the "Consecration of Napoleon by Pope Pius VII.," which had taken place at Notre-Dame in Paris on December 2, 1804. The artist shows us Napoleon, himself just consecrated, placing a crown on the head of the Empress Josephine. The picture is full of pomp and splendour, far enough removed, we feel, from the austere ideals with which the Republicans had set out. The dresses of the Court ladies, the whole setting of the scene, are carefully studied, down to the smallest details, but David's love of a classical simplicity is sufficiently indicated by the dignity of the poses and the general air of imperial sobriety.

Whilst a visitor at the palace of the Tuileries, the Pope sat to David for his portrait, and the Holy Father is said to have confessed to a feeling of terror when he found himself shut up alone in the room with a Jacobin. This portrait is one of his most important pictures; but the work by which we remember him best is another portrait, his Madame Récamier, a very pleasing representation of the beautiful and witty banker's wife, who, during the time that Napoleon was Consul, received everybody worth knowing in her salon. This picture was painted early in 1804; it is in the Louvre now, and is typical of the taste of the times, as you see in the flowing lines of the simple white dress, the



PORTRAIT OF MADAME PERIZAT  
(After the picture by David in the Louvre.)



## DAVID

severity of the plain, classical furniture, the sofa, the foot-stool, the tall, antique lamp, showing how far France had travelled from the days of Louis XV., when dress was all flounces and broken lines, delicate laces and knots of soft ribbons, and furniture all gilded, rounded in shape and displaying a hundred fantastic ornamentations.

Our illustration of Madame Sériziat and her child shows a different side to David's character, and it is hard to associate the painter of this pretty, smiling mother with the regicide and fanatic we know him to have been. Yet from it we learn how, all through those troublous times, mothers did pick nosegays to make their babies laugh, and wear charming white frocks, and know the joy of homely, happy days; facts that, reading only history-books, we are apt to forget.

We have a portrait by David in the National Gallery, Eliza Bonaparte, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, bought not long ago in Florence. It is unfinished, but it is a vivid portrait of the young Grand Duchess in the high-waisted, white dress of the period, with an astonishingly bright shoulder-strap and girdle of scarlet. She has the strongly marked features, grey eyes, and curious lank, untidy hair of the Bonapartes. Behind her is an Italian landscape of lake and mountains.

David's portraits are the best part of his work; he drew well, and he painted them with a kind of



## FRENCH PAINTERS

severe sincerity that charms the eye. In his more ambitious pictures there are often passages of great beauty, but he sometimes becomes theatrical by over-emphasizing the attitude of his figures. He was a good teacher, and his remarks to his pupils show that his ideals flew far higher than his achievement. These ideals were based, as I have said, on classical art, and particularly on the sculpture of late Greece and of Rome. When he heard of the Parthenon marbles, which Lord Elgin brought to England in 1810, he said they made him long to be a young man and begin his whole career over again.

After Napoleon's downfall at Waterloo, David retired to Brussels, where he was treated with much respect; his health was bad, but he worked on to the last, and was correcting an engraving from his "Leonidas at Thermopylæ" when he died, at the age of seventy-seven. That picture had been the last he painted before he was forced to leave France. On the rock in the background is the inscription, "Passers-by, go say to the Lacedemonians, that we died here obeying our orders."

## PART VIII

# THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PAINTERS

THE history of art in our native land goes back to the thirteenth century, when English miniature-painters were known all over the Continent, and the embroidery-work of English nuns was highly prized in every well-appointed foreign convent. Our glass-painters were well known too, and our architects, although the plan of their great cathedrals was for the most part borrowed from the sister-churches in the North of France, and adapted to English uses. Paintings of the period you can still see on the walls of the Chapter-house at Westminster, which hold their own even when compared to work produced in Italy at the same period. But the two centuries following were lean years for England. First the French Wars, and then the Wars of the Roses, brought in their train poverty and unrest.

It was not till the reign of Henry VII. that our nation found peace to enjoy, and wealth to

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procure, treasures of art. Then it came about that in the dearth of native artists caused by the long years of warfare, foreign artists had to be employed.

Mabuse (1472-1535), the Flemish painter, whose "Adoration of the Magi" now hangs in the National Gallery, was brought over to paint for Henry VII.; Holbein, the German, was, as you will remember, Court painter to Henry VIII.; after him came the Dutchman, Antonis Mor (1519-1576), who was sent to England in 1553 to paint the portrait of the Queen, Mary, wife of Philip II. of Spain. This portrait is now in the Prado at Madrid. You can see in the National Portrait Gallery Mor's fine picture, of Sir Thomas Gresham, merchant and banker, who played such an important part in the reigns of Edward VI. and his sister Mary, founding the Royal Exchange and a college in London, still called by his name, "for the gratuitous instruction of all who choose to attend the lectures."

To the same period belongs Hans Eworts, of a Flemish family, whose dim but capable portraits are to be found in private collections all over England (1543-1574).

The next painter, Isaac Oliver (1556-1617), though brought up in England and reckoned as an Englishman, was of foreign parentage on both sides, with a French father and a Dutch mother.

## ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PAINTERS

He is best known as a miniature-painter, but there has been lately discovered a fine picture by him of Henry, the eldest son of James I., on horseback. The gallant young Prince, who died so early, was himself a patron of the arts, and when he was created Prince of Wales he chose for his surveyor of works Inigo Jones, whose name you will remember as architect to Charles I.

Charles I. was the patron of Van Dyck and Rubens, both Flemings; Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680), whom Pepys in his Diary describes as "a mighty proud man and full of state," was Court painter to Charles II., and first came to England in the train of William of Orange, "Dutch William," who had come to wed Mary, daughter of Charles I. This was in 1641, the year of Van Dyck's death, and Lely remained in England painting at first quite in the manner of the Flemish master, into whose shoes he had stepped. He continued to flourish through the Civil War, was patronized by Cromwell and his Ironsides, and even proposed a scheme for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament, which, however, was not carried out. At the Restoration, this adaptable artist became Court painter to Charles II., and his series of royal favourites, delicately finished, hangs now in the galleries of Hampton Court. Another series, his Admirals, are to be seen in the Painted Chamber at Greenwich Hospital; by him, too, are the portraits

## ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PAINTERS

of the Duke of Buckingham and Wycherley, the playwright, in the National Portrait Gallery. Lely had a town-house in Covent Garden and a country-house at Kew ; he was much esteemed for his wit and for his good taste in all matters concerned with art. His work had a lasting influence on those artists who followed him, and the English school of painting which flourished in the eighteenth century had good cause to be grateful to the memory of the Dutchman, Peter Lely, whose real name, by the way, was Pieter van der Vaes, surnamed *le Lys* or *Lely* from the sign of the lily which decorated his father's shop at The Hague.

You may see in the National Portrait Gallery a fine picture of one Endymion Porter, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Charles I., painted by an artist who bears the thoroughly English name of William Dobson (1610-1646). Dobson's method was, however, formed entirely by Van Dyck, who discovered him by chance one day, employed him to help as drapery-man in his studio, and taught him to copy his work so exactly that their pictures have often been mistaken. After his master's death, Dobson was appointed Serjeant Painter to Charles I., but he was ruined by the Civil War, which broke out shortly afterwards. In Cromwell's time he sank into debt and dishonour, and was unable to retrieve his position at the Restoration. We have,

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therefore, to wait till the reign of Queen Anne, with her "entirely English heart," before any great English artist appears to paint pictures which shall bear on them the "strong stamp of their native land."



## CHAPTER I

HOGARTH (1697-1764).

THIS first English painter was Hogarth, who, born while William III. still reigned, lived to see George III. on the throne, and throughout that period drew, unwearyingly, a long series of pictures which faithfully reflect the various habits and customs of his age. His father-in-law, Sir James Thornhill, himself Serjeant Painter, was employed by Queen Anne to paint the dome of S. Paul's, newly rebuilt after the Great Fire, a piece of patriotism which caused enormous disgust to the Italian artist, Ricci, who had made sure of the commission. Thornhill's house, decorated with wall-paintings by his own hand, still stands in Dean Street, Soho, looking like the setting of one of his son-in-law's pictures, with its spacious panelled rooms, its wide, shallow staircases, and its marble-paved hall, made conveniently large to admit the linkmen and the sedan-chairs of the guests.

Hogarth was born in the parish of Great S. Bartholomew's, "next door to Mr. Downinge's, the Printer's," but he came of an old yeoman family from Westmorland, and was sent to school in his

## HOGARTH

father's county. This father was an unsuccessful literary man, and Hogarth, by his own wish, left school early to help his family, and became apprentice to a silver-plate engraver at the Sign of the Golden Angel in Cranbourne Street, where he learnt to engrave the great salvers and tankards of the period, and designed a business card for his master, with the Angel itself bearing a stout palm-branch on it. When he later set up as an engraver he designed his own card, decorating it with Cupids. It bears the date 1720. Hogarth began by engraving coats-of-arms and shop-bills, but he rose quickly to more ambitious work, and illustrated books for the booksellers. In this way he made a complete set of illustrations for Butler's "Hudibras."

He probably found the want of better instruction in drawing, for about this time he began to attend the private art-school kept by Sir James Thornhill, and there learnt to paint in oils. There, too, he made the acquaintance of Thornhill's daughter, Jane, with whom he made a runaway marriage, the young lady being then only nineteen years old. She must have been a handsome girl, to judge from her portrait as "Sigismunda," in the National Gallery, though, as that was painted more than twenty years later, her charms had had time to mature. Her parents forgave the young couple after the appearance of Hogarth's first series of narrative pictures. To paint pictures on a canvas as a

## ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PAINTERS

story is told by scenes on the stage was a new idea in his time, and this first series had a great success. He engraved his pictures himself, and sold the set to subscribers, of whom he had, even at that time, no fewer than twelve hundred, as his account-books tell us.

In 1733 Hogarth took the house in Leicester Square, in which he lived for the rest of his life. It was called "The Golden Head," from a bust of Van Dyck which Hogarth himself had carved in cork, and gilded. His father-in-law died about this time, and Hogarth, inheriting his studio and its fittings, decided to carry on his school of art, which he did with great success for over thirty years.

His next series of eight pictures was called "The Rake's Progress," a name which he copied from Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." This series was bought by Beckford, the Lord Mayor, but, fortunately for us, was purchased later by Sir John Soane, the architect of the Bank of England, who left his pictures and his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields to the nation. If you go there you will see how Hogarth describes the different episodes in the life of this worthless young gentleman from the beginning, when the tailor is measuring him for his mourning after his father's death, right through his shameful career, occupied only in dissipating in the most disgraceful fashion the fortune he had inherited. We see him in his dressing-room, sur-

## HOGARTH

rounded by sycophants, with his music-master playing opera-tunes on his harpsichord, and his fencing-master ready to give him a lesson ; again, he is in a tavern in Drury Lane after a night of drink and folly ; later he is being arrested for debt in S. James's Street on his way to pay his respects to Queen Caroline at the palace, the familiar front of which we see in the background. The silly fellow is wearing a grand new Court suit : a Welshman with a tall leek in his three-cornered hat tells us that this was S. David's Day, March 1, the Queen's birthday. The next picture is his marriage in old Marylebone Church to an elderly, one-eyed bride, chosen for her money, which he needs to patch up his fallen fortunes ; but his new wealth goes the way of the old. In the next picture, he curses his fate, a ruined gambler, in White's coffee-house in Covent Garden. This tavern had been recently burned down, and Hogarth paints the flames already playing round the wainscot. The rake is next seen sitting in the Fleet Prison, dunned for his daily expenses, upbraided by his outraged wife. The last stage of degradation is reached, when, stripped and raving, he lies, a madman, in Bedlam Hospital, two fine ladies in full dress standing by, according to the strange fashion of the time, to see the show.

In spite of the success of this second series of pictures when engraved, Hogarth was ambitious to show his talent in other directions. He therefore

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painted two large canvases, "The Pool of Bethesda" and "The Good Samaritan," which he presented to S. Bartholomew's Hospital, where they still hang on the staircase. He painted portraits too, among them that of Captain Coram, who endowed the Foundling Hospital. Hogarth was much interested in this charity, and was one of the original governors. He painted "The March to Finchley," describing the Guards leaving London on the road to Scotland to quell the Stuart Rising of 1745. This picture was sold by lottery, and, as good luck would have it, the Foundling Hospital drew the right number. You can still see the "March" any Sunday morning in the Hospital, which is thrown open to visitors after morning service. It was Hogarth's idea to exhibit pictures there for the good of the institution, and in George II.'s time it became fashionable to lounge away a morning at the Foundling. Some think this fashion was, indirectly, the beginning of the Royal Academy.

The "Marriage à la Mode," in the National Gallery, another series of six pictures, is Hogarth's best-known work. It is the old story of the poor man of noble birth marrying for money and not for love, and the subsequent misfortunes of the couple. The first picture is the signing of the marriage contract in the house of the bridegroom's father, the gouty Earl. You see the coronets on the furniture.



## HOGARTH

The pretty bride, an alderman's daughter, takes little interest in the poor stupid lord, her bridegroom, in his red-heeled shoes. On the walls, as in so many of Hogarth's interiors, are pictures, intended to illustrate the subject of which he treats. Here are Judith, who slew Holofernes ; David and the giant Goliath ; Pharoah in the Red Sea, and many others. The next picture is the young couple's drawing-room, copied from the one still existing at 5, Arlington Street, then the house of the Minister of George II., Sir Robert Walpole. The clock over the mantelpiece points to half-past twelve, but they are still at breakfast, my lady with her hair undressed, my lord just home from an ill-spent night. The house-steward, unable to gain their attention to his unpaid bills, is leaving the room. And so we pass through a scene showing my lord's ill associates to one where my lady sits at her toilet in a fine bedroom. Her tall bed, filling one alcove, bears a coronet, her mirror is topped by another ; by now she is a Countess. The hairdresser is busy with her hair, and her baby's coral is tied to her chair. Around her, visitors are grouped in a wide half-circle, drinking chocolate, spouting poems, singing, playing the flute. The only lady present wears a " Pamela " hat of the period, made of straw and tied under her chin ; one of the men has a fan hanging from his wrist ; had it been winter, he would have had a muff ; another has his hair tied up in curl-



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papers. All the whims and fashions of the time of George II. are here seen, satirized, and introduced skilfully into the story. The end now comes quickly. The Countess is unfaithful to her husband, and is obliged to fly to her old home in the City. Through the windows you can see old London Bridge, on which houses then stood. The poor foolish heroine has poisoned herself ; the nurse holds her baby-girl up to her for her last kiss. It is a horrible story of folly and stupidity ; we are glad there is no baby-son to carry on the dishonoured name.

Hogarth was a man of many friends. Johnson's Mrs. Thrale says : " Dear Mr. Hogarth used to give me, as a girl, odd, particular directions about dress, dancing, and other matters." He knew the three first great English novelists, Goldsmith, Fielding, and Richardson, but, best of all, he knew the actor David Garrick. He painted Garrick once with his pretty Austrian wife, the dancer Violetta. He has chosen a charming comedy pose. From behind his chair the wife tries to steal away the quill pen with which her husband is busy writing a prologue to some play. This picture is now in the King's Collection at Windsor. In the National Gallery is a sketch from life, the beautiful " Shrimp Girl," famous for its limpid colouring.

Hogarth's last series of pictures, " The Election," is, like " The Rake," to be seen in the Soane Museum. It consists of four large paintings, which

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once belonged to Garrick. They are full of incident, from the first scene at the electioneering banquet to the final charring of the Members. Three are out-of-door scenes, with delightful backgrounds of eighteenth-century country-town buildings under summer skies, enlivened by leafy trees.

Hogarth died in his little country house at Chiswick after only a few hours' illness. His wife survived him for many years, and was buried by his side in Chiswick Churchyard.

In his own day Hogarth's work received scanty appreciation. People disliked his subjects. He showed them the seamy side of life, and there was none of the glamour which we, coming nearly two hundred years later, find in this faithful record of how our ancestors lived, what clothes they wore, and how they furnished their rooms. Their contemporaries found little to interest them in the sordid quarrel of the young couple in the "*Marriage à la Mode*," where we are never tired of studying all the carefully painted indications of the fashion of the day. His style, too, did not please them, for the middle eighteenth century loved the so-called "*grand style*" of those late Italian masters who followed Titian a very long way off. Nobody saw that Hogarth was realizing the Italian tradition in the highest sense of the word, painting what he saw of interest in the world around him, which was no more and no less than Titian had done in

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his own Venice long before. Hogarth went even farther back than Titian, for he was able to represent action in his pictures superlatively well, and he told his story through movement, just as Giotto had done. This very fact alienated them too. The eighteenth century loved dignity, and it found Hogarth's pictures, with their eager, hurrying crowds, greatly wanting in that quality.

People are fond of saying that Hogarth is like the Dutch artists, such as de Hooch; but the difference between them is enormous. De Hooch painted a room and the people in it, but he chose his subjects in order to make a beautiful picture; the living people were only part of the exquisite scheme of colour. Hogarth, on the other hand, is so intensely interested in his men and women that he overcrowds his canvas, forcing us to learn all about them, often spoiling in that way the artistic completeness of his work. Yet through it all he had the true artist's eye. He tells us himself that he never trusted to a model; he trained himself to observe, to copy from memory, and then to use freely in his picture whatever he had seen in the daily pageant of life. Life he loved, and when he painted pictures with morals he did not want to frighten us by showing us ugly things, but to interest us by giving us everything he had himself seen; ugly or beautiful, it mattered not, so long only as it was true.

## CHAPTER II

### A LITTLE GROUP OF LATE ITALIAN PAINTERS.

WHILE Hogarth was busy painting and engraving in London, far away in Venice a group of artists were working, content like him to solve their own problems ; real living men, not influenced over-much by the mighty past of their own city, nor by the rococo lightness that marked the work of the French painters of that date. I will tell you a little about four of this group, Tiepolo, Canaletto, Longhi, and Guardi ; but of the four, Longhi (1702-1768) has the most in common with Hogarth, although the Englishman is by far the greater artist. Longhi was a goldsmith's son, and began his artist's life by designing pieces of plate. In the National Gallery you will see two interesting pictures by him, taken straight from the daily life of the ladies of fashion in the Venice of his day. In one a pretty lady in the full white satin skirt, black mantilla, and three-cornered hat of the period gives her hand coquet-tishly to the old fortune-telling witch in a tawny coat, while her attendant gentleman in his white "poke-face" mask and ample cloak lurks behind, anxious to glean her secrets. The other shows us a

## A LITTLE GROUP OF

group of fashionable Venetians visiting a menagerie. In the foreground a formidable rhinoceros is solemnly chumping straw ; behind the wooden barrier sit five people, men and women alike in black, three-cornered hats, the men all masked, one of the ladies in a little round black mask. The paintings are charming in colour, and in the picture they give of the daily life of Venice ; they seem to be illustrations of Browning's lines :

“ Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm  
in May ?

Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to midday,  
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you  
say ? ”

Tiepolo (1696-1770) was a painter of real genius in his way, and his work is the last flame of that fire which, in the days of Veronese, burned so brightly in Venice. Yet he was all himself in his work too, as you can see even from the two small sketches by him in the National Gallery. One is “ The Deposition from the Cross,” where, in the small space covered, you are given a great impression of height and grace. The figures are noble, and the blue sky with smoky clouds, half dimming its radiance, is very characteristic of the painter. Another is a sketch for a royal marriage picture, the Emperor Barbarossa and Beatrix of Burgundy kneeling to receive the episcopal blessing. The picture is finely planned : courtiers and pages throng



## LATE ITALIAN PAINTERS

the altar-steps, musicians play high up under an arch in the background, and a flag hangs its long folds of a peculiarly beautiful yellow which Tiepolo often used. He painted principally altar-pieces for Venetian churches, but he also decorated ceilings superbly. One such ceiling is to be seen in the rococo palace of the Prince-Bishops at Würzburg, the ceiling of the great entrance-hall. You mount the fine staircase, and over you stretch the great painted figures, moving easily in delicate, bright colours, fresh and captivating, foreshortened happily in every conceivable manner. Tiepolo was a very rapid worker, his pictures were much sought after, and Charles III. of Spain sent for him to decorate the royal palace of Madrid with frescoes. He was received with every possible honour, lived eight years there, and died, the best designer and colourist of his day.

The other two painters in this little group were really landscape-painters, who devoted themselves to all the changing aspects of their native city, introducing into their work many little figures to give interest to the scenes.

Canaletto (1697-1768) was a man of an original mind, who, beginning life as a scene-painter, went to Rome to study architectural drawing there. On his return home, he painted Venetian landscapes, allowing himself to take liberties with the buildings, which he arranged as he thought best for his



## A LITTLE GROUP OF

pictures. The result is a sumptuous Venice, its palaces, squares and bridges rising majestically from the sea, as in some beautiful dream. You may study many examples of his work in the National Gallery, and walk in imagination in Venice itself, see the deep blue vault of the sky above the great square of San Marco ; the new buildings, their solid blocks of stone white in the sunshine ; the gay awnings in front of ancient windows ; the huge ships of hay unloading at the wharves. Ships of all kinds he loved to paint ; gala barges and sailing-vessels, gondolas and fishing-boats, he observed them all ; and everywhere he painted people, fit inhabitants of such charming surroundings, crossing the squares, standing in groups to chat, the ladies in full hoops, the gallants gracefully balanced on their thin legs beside them ; some of these figures were painted by Tiepolo, they say. All the pleasant, stately life of Venice is there in this incomparable setting.

Canaletto came twice to England, and he has painted for us a London as beautiful in its way as his Venice. The National Gallery has two of his English pictures, "The Rotunda at Ranelagh," dated 1754, showing the world of fashion at that place of amusement walking about to the strains of the orchestra ; and an earlier picture, "A View from Eton College," painted just about the time that Gray wrote his Ode on the same subject.

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Guardi (1712-1793) was the brother-in-law of Tiepolo, and the pupil of Canaletto. He is said to have imitated his master, but his work, on a smaller scale, has far more brilliancy, and gives a far greater sense of atmosphere. He, too, paints Venice, but it is a city more fairy-like in beauty, in which the buildings seem not to have been erected by human hands, but by some happy, airy miracle. His pictures shimmer in blue and pearl-colour, even the white shirts of his fisher-folk, busy with their nets, have a peculiar radiance, and, in the universal heat, the eye rejoices in the masts of the fishing-boats, crossing the sky with their relieving blackness. Black, too, are the gondolas, and the heavy shadows under the archways and colonnades, which give glimpses beyond of sunflooded courtyards. He painted his figures more carefully even than Canaletto, and disposed beautifully of his crowd of sightseers, or devout Venetians walking in procession on their way to some high church solemnity: as his people pass on their way, or stop and talk in little groups, they seem to sparkle in the sunshine, and some bright reflection from their happy, animated lives falls upon us whilst we stand to watch them.

## CHAPTER III

JOSHUA REYNOLDS (1723-1792).

IN Sir Joshua Reynolds we find eminently the two great characteristics of English painting : its moderation and its sincere love of beauty.

Moderation is that quality which makes artists satisfied to paint a picture under the impulse of a single idea, and then, without further effort, to rest content. You will find this peace-giving quality in all Reynolds' work. It may make you say, "These ladies of his lived such quiet lives, this repose of expression was natural to them." That is, of course, true; but your peace of mind in looking at them comes as well from the artist's single-mindedness; he saw what he wanted to express, and he strove for that alone.

The second characteristic includes the love of colour, for only with its help can this love of beauty be fully expressed. Here you will notice that Reynolds' colour has faded, but it is always good. That it has faded is almost an added charm: his elderly ladies are really ageing, you love them for the witty, graceful way they allow the change: his children are a little pallid, but you feel that it is

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only the close air of the studio; they will recover their roses out there in their father's park. His people are beautiful in the fullest sense of the word, and the consciousness of their beauty quickens your pleasure as you look.

Reynolds was a Devonshire man, the son of a clergyman, master of the Grammar School at Plympton. His father was a man of an unworldly and gentle character, who brought up a large family on very small means. Joshua was the seventh child, and was educated at his father's school until, at the age of seventeen, having shown promise as an artist, he was sent to London to serve his apprenticeship under the painter Hudson (1701-1779), another Devonshire man, whose portraits of George II. and of the composer Handel are to be seen in the National Portrait Gallery. Reynolds' sister, Mary, who had married a solicitor, Mr. Palmer, helped to pay the money required by Hudson, a large sum, equal to the poor school-master's salary for a year. In London the young pupil was set to copy late Italian masters of an unprofitable kind, and only one small adventure befell him, which forms a curious link with the past. He saw, in the auction-room, Pope, the poet of Queen Anne's reign, then a man of over fifty, and not long before his death. The young artist was proud to touch his hand, that hand which, years before, had written the immortal "Rape of the Lock." Reynolds

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was to live till George III. had been over thirty years on the throne, and was himself to give his hand in honoured friendship to all the greatest men of that long Georgian period; he painted (you can see the picture in the National Gallery) the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV.; it is a long vista, and Reynolds's figure passes down it with dignity.

Reynolds did not stay the full four years of his apprenticeship in Hudson's studio; he returned to Devonshire and painted many portraits in his native county. At Lord Edgumbe's house he made his first notable friend, Commodore Keppel, later the well-known Admiral, in whose ship Reynolds sailed for Lisbon, arriving in time at Rome, where he spent two years to his own "measureless content," as he wrote in one of his letters home. He worked the whole of this time, copying especially the pictures of Titian, Raphael, and Rembrandt, and making notes on everything he saw. From these notes and from his later writings we learn how unbounded was his admiration for the great Michelangelo. Years after, when he revisited Italy, he was at first disappointed not to recapture his early joy in the colouring of these old masters, and he made the curious discovery that he missed the contrast with the white paper of his notebooks, which had heightened the effect of the brilliant pictures he had so much admired as he first stood, a young man, scribbling in those galleries. From this journey he



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brought back many sketches from famous pictures; one from Rubens' "Saint Cecilia," for example, in which his wife, Helena Fourment, poses as the Saint, is said to have suggested Reynolds's beautiful "Mrs. Sheridan as Saint Cecilia." Among the English painters staying in Rome at the time was the landscape-painter, Richard Wilson, of whom you will hear later; and Reynolds learnt to know many travelling Englishmen whom he later numbered among his friends and patrons. Of the old masters whose work attracted him there, he only mentions Massaccio, whose frescoes were to fascinate Walpole's protégé, the engraver, Patch, so much, that he spent his time in Rome copying them for his employer.

In 1752 Reynolds took rooms in S. Martin's Lane, and his youngest sister, Frances, came to look after him. His first portrait painted in London was that of Captain Keppel, who sat to him ten times. The success of this picture brought him many patrons. Seven years later came his busiest year, when he painted no less than one hundred and fifty-six portraits. The list seems endless of those who during that time came to him to be painted, and among his sitters we read of three royal Dukes, many Duchesses and other fine ladies, including Lady Coventry and the Duchess of Hamilton, the Irish Miss Gummings, whose beauty drew such crowds, we are told, that one of them had to call



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for help to the officers of the Guard, which made their admirers stare the more.

One picture of this period you can see in the National Gallery—the delicately perfect Anne, Countess of Albemarle, the mother of Captain Keppel. This middle-aged lady, in her gown of blue and white brocade, her hood drawn comfortably over her head, quietly tatting in her red chair, has an air of pleasant dignity delightful to see, and the picture is as charming as any of Reynolds's lovely women and happy young mothers.

It was, of course, impossible for Reynolds to do all his own draperies and backgrounds in so many rapidly painted pictures. He employed, therefore, "drapery men," who did these parts under his direction and from his sketches, whilst he bestowed the last magical touches on the finished portraits.

He has left many pocket-books, in which his social engagements are carefully noted down, and we see how full his life was, the daylight time filled with sittings, his evenings with parties and dinners of all kinds. His three great friends were Garrick, Goldsmith, and Dr. Johnson, whom we seem to know best of all from Boswell's famous "Life." In that "Life" Reynolds and his sister, Johnson's "dearest dear," recur again and again. Miss Reynolds was a special favourite with the great man because she gave her visitors tea three times a day, and Johnson was an insatiable tea-drinker. Hogarth

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and Reynolds were never friends ; their methods and ideals in art were too different.

The year of King George III.'s accession, in 1760, Reynolds went to live in Leicester Square, which was then called Leicester Fields. His house had belonged to the father of the landscape-painter, George Morland, of whom you will hear later. This year you must remember as the first when a public exhibition of pictures was held in London. By the next year the artists had already quarrelled among themselves, and two separate exhibitions were opened. Reynolds sent his work to the society exhibiting in Spring Gardens. His most interesting picture was the portrait of Lawrence Sterne, author of "Tristram Shandy," whose sly, humorous face under the slightly crooked wig you perhaps know from engravings. Sterne declared that Reynolds gave him the portrait, but this is not likely, as the painter is hardly ever known to have painted for love.

The young King married Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in 1761, and Reynolds was kept busy painting the fine folk who came to town for the royal marriage. He painted three of the bridesmaids, among them the Lady Sarah Lennox, who, it is said, had narrowly escaped being the royal bride herself. George III. had certainly taken much interest in the charming girl, who is painted leaning from a window of Holland House talking

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to Lady Susan Strangways, who holds a dove in her hand. Lady Sarah's nephew, Charles Fox, afterwards the famous Whig statesman, is urging Lady Susan to go into the house to rehearse a play they were to act together. The picture has a certain fresh charm, but the three figures do not give that feeling of dramatic unity which was so strong in Reynolds's later groups. The same year he painted Horace Walpole, that prince of letter-writers, with a group of friends, among them George Selwyn, the wit. It is curious to note that, though Reynolds had painted Walpole before, his sitter rarely gave him any but the most half-hearted praise.

In Hertford House is the celebrated picture of Nelly O'Brien, the actress, perhaps Reynolds's masterpiece. She sits nursing her little dog with a fine air of collectedness, her hat casting a shadow over the upper part of her face. Reynolds has here set himself the same problem so successfully solved by Rubens in his "Chapeau de Paille," a picture which the English painter did not himself see till many years later. When he did examine it, he praised it heartily for the transparency of its colour—"clear as if seen in the open air"—and he noted the hat and feathers of the sitter, "so airily put on." Another charming picture of this period is Miss Horneck, a Devonshire friend, playfully called the "Jessamy Bride." The girl is sitting on the floor, Persian fashion, cross-legged on a cushion; she

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wears a turban, under which her pretty English face, with its slightly narrowed eyes, looks out very winningly.

Sir Joshua never married, and amongst all his friends only one lady has ever had her name coupled with his, Miss Angelica Kauffmann, a Swiss artist, much praised at the time for her easy, graceful paintings. You may read her story in Miss Thackeray's "Miss Angel." Another warm friend was Mrs. Thrale of Streatham, Johnson's constant admirer. She was a kindly, witty woman, with a wealthy husband, a brewer. By her wish Sir Joshua painted a series of portraits of all those whom she loved best to entertain at her villa. Among these were Goldsmith, Garrick, Dr. Burney (the musician, and the father of Miss Burney of "Evelina" fame), Dr. Johnson, and Sir Joshua's picture of himself, with his familiar ear-trumpet—he had been deaf ever since his stay in Italy. This series is now scattered, but the memory of the originals is still green, and their names raise echoes of many happy conversations round Mrs. Thrale's table.

In the National Gallery you can see "Lady Cockburn and her Children," one of the best-preserved of all Sir Joshua's pictures. The lady plays with her three round-limbed boys, her orange-yellow dress in fine harmony with the red of the fluttering curtain and the gaudy feathers of the

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splendid, rather shapeless macaw. It is a study in warm, tawny colour, and is signed and dated 1775 in letters like embroidery on the lady's dress. Just so, when he painted Mrs. Siddons, the great actress, as the "Tragic Muse," in a picture now in the Dulwich Gallery, he placed his name on her garment, because, as he is reported to have said, he could not resist the opportunity of going down in this way to posterity. The picture of Mrs. Siddons is a very fine one, and she always said that she had herself assumed the magnificent pose. Reynolds, on the other hand, admitted that he had taken the idea from the "Isaiah" of Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Both statements may be reconciled.

The pretty "Infant Samuel" in the National Gallery has always been very popular; and much admiration was excited at the time by the pictures designed for the west window of New College Chapel, Oxford, the "Nativity," with the Virtues below. Mrs. Sheridan, his old favourite, sat for Charity. Reynolds was disappointed with their effect as glass-paintings, but when lit up by the glow of the setting sun they will always remain fine examples of his art.

A few years later Reynolds painted Horace Walpole's three nieces, the Ladies Waldegrave, sitting at their work-table, bending their pretty heads over their embroidery. No one would guess to look at them that they had all been crossed in



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love. Perhaps their disappointments had not cut deep. Their uncle tells us that they all married later.

In 1786 Reynolds painted the "Lord Heathfield" of the National Gallery, that splendid, heroic portrait of the conqueror of Gibraltar, holding the big key of the fortress in his hand. Another well-known picture of the same year in the same place is the so-called "Cherub-Heads," all pictures of the same little girl, Frances Gordon, then just four years old.

But Reynolds's long career was drawing to a close. In 1789 his eyesight began to fail, and though he did not become quite blind, he never painted again, and, three years later, died, as he had lived, with tranquil courage.

As I said in the beginning, Reynolds shone before all things in his colouring. His drawing was sometimes weak, but he always knew how to cover this defect by his colour. This makes it all the sadder that his paint has always had a tendency to fade. Too often his pictures have been restored; but when you are fortunate enough to see an untouched one, you will recognize that a faded Sir Joshua is better than a restored one.

Sir Joshua was the first President of the Royal Academy, and every other year he delivered, as one of his official duties, a discourse to the students. The earlier discourses are supposed to have received a final polish from the pen of Dr. Johnson,



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but the ideas are entirely those of Reynolds, and if he there holds up a higher ideal than he always attained in his work, they are none the less valuable as criticisms of his art. The last discourse is especially interesting, as it was mainly concerned with Michelangelo. It ends with the words: "I feel a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect that this discourse bears testimony to that truly divine man, and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy might be the name of Michelangelo."

Reynolds has created a type of Englishwoman which makes us proud of our nation. His little children are the first ever dressed as children. Velasquez's children are dressed exactly like their elders; so, too, were the children of Hals and Van Dyck. It was Reynolds who invented baby-frocks, and set the fashion to all those who followed him. Best of all, we are told, he loved to paint the dirty children from the slums behind Leicester Square—"his little maggots," as he laughingly called them. In his picture, "Cupid as Linkman," we see just such a child, a dark-haired cherub of a gutter-boy, with roguish wings sprouting from his old coat, and in his hand the torch, which he used, like his namesake, to show the ladies their way home through the unlighted streets.

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We must not, however, forget that, while Reynolds painted the women and children of England with a charm all his own, he painted, too, perfect men-portraits—scholars and statesmen, soldiers and sailors, lawyers and bishops, all came to him to be painted, and we see them now in their portraits as they were in life, with their various characteristics of heart and mind. He shows us as in a mirror the vast, many-coloured life of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and without the work of his tireless brush, we, who love to realize the past by in some measure reconstructing it, should be poor indeed.

## CHAPTER IV

GAINSBOROUGH (1727-1788).

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH was a Suffolk man, the son of a woollen manufacturer, a busy, genial man, who travelled for the sake of his business in France and Holland. He introduced the "shroud" trade into his part of the world, for in those days it was settled by law that everybody must be buried in wool in order to encourage the wool-trade, and the Parish Registers duly noted when this was done. Thomas was the youngest of his nine children. Two of the brothers were inventors, and one of them is said to have helped Watts of steam-engine fame. Thomas was sent to the Grammar School of his native town of Sudbury, kept by his uncle, and in his free hours sketched from nature, copying faithfully every clump of trees and every hedgerow that caught his fancy. Before he was fifteen he went to London and was apprenticed to Gravelot, a clever French engraver, from whom Gainsborough learnt much. He went to the School of Art in S. Martin's Lane too, and painted portraits and landscapes for small fees. But, before he was twenty, he was home in Suffolk again, and married to a beauti-

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ful young girl of eighteen, who, luckily, had a small fortune of her own. The young couple took a little house in Ipswich, and to this period belongs the landscape, called "Gainsborough's Forest," in the National Gallery, a picture of the woods of Connard, a Suffolk village, with in the foreground, country-folk, at their work or resting, and behind a church seen through the trees.

Gainsborough made friends easily, and he had many commissions to paint portraits for the neighbouring families. He decorated the panels on their walls too, and he introduced, we are told, the portraits of his two little daughters, chasing a butterfly, into one of these panels. Their names were Margaret and Mary, and the same subject is treated in a picture now in the National Gallery. The two little maids are standing hand in hand under leafy trees. The younger stretches out her hand to catch the butterfly which just eludes her. Their quaint, long dresses are in delicate shades of pale yellow and green ; in the corner is a tall, handsome thistle. I have seen a drawing of Mrs. Gainsborough as she must have looked at this time ; her husband drew her as she started for church on Sunday morning, picking her way carefully across the street in her high-heeled shoes, her paniered dress, and little straw hat. It was a happy, peaceful time for the painter ; he loved music, learnt to play the fiddle, and belonged to a musical society in the town.

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Musical instruments were his passion, and the way in which he paints them shows his technical knowledge of them. He would buy every new one he saw, and we hear of him possessing in turn a viol de gamba, a hautboy, and a theorbo. There is a portrait by him in Hampton Court of his son-in-law, Dr. Fischer, one of Queen Charlotte's musicians ; his fiddle lies on the chair beside him, so accurately painted that its maker's name could at once be given by anyone well read in the history of fiddles.

Gainsborough moved, in 1760, to the fashionable town of Bath. He took a house more expensive than his prudent wife approved, but sitters soon flocked to his studio in the newly-built Circus. These pictures were mostly exhibited at the Royal Academy, of which Gainsborough was an original member, and there year after year were to be seen large full-length portraits by him of fine ladies and gentlemen, actors and officers of His Majesty's army. He painted Garrick for the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon, and his was Mrs. Garrick's favourite among all the portraits that had been painted of her "Davy."

Miss Moser, the flower-painter, who with Sir Joshua's Miss Kauffmann were the only two women ever elected to the Royal Academy, wrote one year a description of what had been the most talked-of picture in that year's exhibition, "a por-



THE BLUE BOY.

(After the picture by Thomas Gainsborough in the Duke of Westminster's Collection.)





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trait of a gentleman in a Van Dyke habit," possibly the Duke of Westminster's famous "Blue Boy," one of Gainsborough's masterpieces. The youth was the son of a well-to-do ironmonger, Jonathan Buttall of Soho ; the picture is interesting, because it is supposed to have led Sir Joshua, in one of his discourses, to have declaimed against the use of blue as the dominant colour in a picture, which, he says, should rather be kept to masses of light of a "warm mellow colour, yellow, red, or a yellowish white." The "Blue Boy" disproves this statement triumphantly : its blue colour, glowing with an inner light, is the keynote in a beautiful scheme of various shades, all cool.

You see him standing in our illustration, the gallant young fellow, holding his wide plumed hat in his right hand, his left on his hip, his cloak thrown over his arm. Behind him, the cloudy sky brightening on the horizon and the park-like landscape form a kind of natural background to his slim elegance. He may have been lying on that grassy hillock, reading Spenser's "Faery Queen," and have just sprung up to attention, his dreaming eyes still full of the poetry that he loves.

During this Bath period, when Gainsborough had to send his pictures up to London for exhibition, he always confided them to the care of Wiltshire, the carrier, who refused to accept any payment, so great was his admiration of the artist's

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work. Gainsborough, with his usual generosity, would give the man a picture now and then, and the portrait of Orpin, Parish Clerk of Bradford-on-Avon, now in the National Gallery, was one of these gifts, and was bought from one of Wiltshire's descendants. Gainsborough used to say that this picture was painted to music, for as he worked, he heard the sweet sound of singing from another room, and the melody wove itself into the expression of the man on his canvas. Amongst other well-known people painted by him at Bath are Richardson, the bookseller who wrote "Pamela" and many thrilling romances of the day, and the ill-fated young poet, Chatterton of Bristol.

Gainsborough's last move was to London, where, in 1774, he rented part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall, which is still standing. The King, George III., sent for him at once, and set the fashion of admiring the Gainsborough portraits, nor did this popularity ever desert him. The Royal Family sat to him often. At this time there was a large nursery full of pretty fair-haired royal children, and in the royal collection at Windsor there are no fewer than seventeen life-sized heads of different members of the King's family, all painted by Gainsborough in the course of one month, showing how extraordinarily rapidly he worked. These portraits, like all the rest of his beautiful, swiftly executed pictures, bear no sign of hesitation or of

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second thoughts ; they testify to a happy conception carried out straightway to a perfect conclusion.

He painted the famous Duchess of Devonshire several times, at first finding her loveliness difficult to catch. "Her Grace is too hard for me," he said. But he conquered the likeness at last in the well-known portrait of her that was stolen after its sale at Christie's auction rooms, and only discovered nearly thirty years later. It is now in America.

In 1780, when the exhibition of the Royal Academy was first held at Somerset House, Gainsborough showed a portrait of Sir Henry Bate Dudley, now in the National Gallery. This curious Baronet-clergyman was the first editor of the *Morning Post*, and was sent by Garrick to report on Mrs. Siddons when that great actress made her first appearance on the stage at Cheltenham. He was himself a playwright, published sermons, and was a friend of the Prince Regent, who, as George IV., made him Prebend of Ely.

The lovely portrait of Mrs. Siddons in the National Gallery was also painted by Gainsborough when she was twenty-eight, just a year before Reynolds immortalized her as the "Tragic Muse." There is a good deal of severity in the beautiful face of the Gainsborough portrait, as she sits there so quietly dignified in her striped dress of blue and

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white. "There is no end to your nose, madam," he is reported to have said to her chidingly ; and she may have struck the painter as awe-inspiring. People were apt to be frightened of Mrs. Siddons, and Miss Burney wrote that her "deportment was by no means engaging," while Mrs. Thrale exclaimed on the same occasion : "Why, this is a leaden goddess we are all worshipping !" Years after, when Mrs. Siddons was an old woman, a friend saw her seated near her picture, and, looking from one to the other, remarked that it was like her still at the age of seventy.

About the same time as the Siddons portrait, Gainsborough painted the "View in the Mall of S. James's Park," an enchanting picture of the world of fashion airing itself in the green shades of their favourite walk, "all full of motion and flutter, like a lady's fan." It is the one picture of his which has in it a Watteau-like touch. Just so did the great Frenchman paint his feathery trees, and in just such a green world did he love to place his charming men and women. Gainsborough's first master, Gravelot, knew Watteau's work well, and he may have introduced his pupil to the engravings of the "Fêtes Champêtres." The originals he could not have seen, for he never left England.

His working days were nearly over. In 1788 the town was all excitement at the trial of Warren

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Hastings, of the East India Company, impeached before the House of Lords. To this trial Gainsborough, of course, went, and it was there that he first became conscious of illness. This was the beginning of the end for the great painter, who died a few months later, after much suffering. As he lay dying, Reynolds was asked to come and see him. There had been a coolness between the two men, whose characters, quite apart from professional jealousy, were too different to allow of any real friendship. But now, in the shadow of death, everything was forgiven. "If any little jealousies had subsisted between us," Sir Joshua said, "they were forgotten in those moments of sincerity." Nothing was remembered but the art they both loved and served so well. "We are all going to Heaven," said the dying man to the President, "and Van Dyck is of the company."

Reynolds himself pronounced Gainsborough's obituary oration at the Royal Academy; in it he showed that, though the dead master had learnt his art at the feet of Rubens and Van Dyck, "he applied to the originals of nature that which he saw with his own eyes, and imitated, not in the manner of those artists, but in his own." This is indeed true; Gainsborough's vision was singularly deep, and what he saw he was able, with a happy inventiveness, to carry out, lightly and securely.

Though a Court painter, Gainsborough went little



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into society ; he liked best to spend his evenings quietly with his wife, drawing her as she sat beside him.

Nor must we forget that he was also a landscape painter. As he grew more occupied with his portraits, he had less time to give to his earlier love, but "I painted portraits for money," he said, "landscapes because I loved them." Like Rubens, he knew how to seize the general idea of a country-side, and select just such parts as should compose a noble picture. He is the founder of the modern school of landscape-painting. You can see many examples in the National Gallery : "The Market Cart"; "The Watering Place," treated in several different ways; "The View of Dedham," this last a charming picture of a distant village, with a church-spire, seen across sunlit meadows, from a copse of shady trees in the foreground. But it is part of Gainsborough's genius that there is no sharp distinction between these two sides of his art. In his portraits lovely landscapes surround his sitters, as you may see, for example, in Hertford House, where his "Perdita Robinson" might any minute rise from the grassy bank on which she sits, call her little eager dog to follow her, and walk off into the woods beyond. Just so his landscapes are decorated with charming figures, so rightly placed, so happily intent on their own occupations of love-making, cart-driving, or wayside loitering, that not for a moment do we feel

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they are put in arbitrarily ; they are there because Gainsborough, in his simple, happy way, saw them there, and wished us to share his pleasure in them. For Gainsborough was before all things a lover of beauty, and amongst our English artists no one has equalled him in his power of rendering it.

## CHAPTER V

ROMNEY (1734-1802).

"ALL the town," said Lord Thurlow the lawyer, "is divided into two factions, the Reynolds and the Romney, and I am of the Romney faction." No men could well have been more different than the two portrait-painters who thus shared the privilege of painting the famous men and beautiful women in the days when George III. was King. Reynolds, courteous, well balanced and sociable, placidly fulfilled his destiny; Romney, reserved, excitable and morbid, created his own difficulties, and never knew happiness, except in a few dazzling interludes. "Fear has always been my enemy," he wrote to his friend Hayley, the poetaster, and by fear his life was crippled, in spite of his genius. He was the son of a Lancashire cabinet-maker, who prided himself on being the first to introduce mahogany furniture into the north of England. In his father's house, Romney found a copy of Leonardo's "Treatise on Painting," with prints, from which he made drawings. After this admirable introduction to his art, he had to content himself with what teaching he could procure, and was at one time apprenticed to a

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travelling portrait-painter. He made an imprudent marriage when only twenty with a young servant-girl who had nursed him when he lay ill with a fever at a poor inn. Six years later, when he went to try his fortunes in London, he left his wife and two children behind him, after having divided his small earnings with her. He made his fortune in time, but he never sent for his family to join him. Romney has been severely blamed for this, but perhaps Mrs. Romney, with no education nor knowledge of town manners, preferred to go on living among her own people. Anyway, there was never any breach between them, and as the son grew up, he divided his time between his two parents ; the little girl died early.

When Romney reached London, Reynolds, in his house in Leicester Square, was in the full tide of his prosperity ; Gainsborough had just settled at Bath, and both painters were attracting countless sitters ; yet the unknown artist soon got a firm foothold in the great world, and exhibited his portraits every year. In two years' time he had saved enough to go to Paris, with introductions which admitted him to the royal collections at the Louvre, the Luxembourg, and the Palais Royal. Curiously enough, he seems to have ignored the modern artists, in whose work Paris was then so rich. He does not mention Boucher, who was by that time directing the restored Gobelin factories and charming the world with his pastoral land-

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scapes, nor Greuze, whose pretty, empty girls' heads were then at the height of their popularity. He does not seem to have noticed the Watteaus in the Louvre ; he preferred the pompous masters of Louis XIV.'s time, who painted in a correct and rather colourless manner. His fullest admiration, however, was given to the Marie de Médicis series by Rubens, then hanging in the Luxembourg, but he does not appear to have been at all influenced by these pictures in his own work.

On his return to London, he found employment without any difficulty. Sir Joshua had been putting up the prices of his portraits, and the younger man's more modest demands suited the public. But Romney was not content with popularity ; his dream had always been to go to Italy, and by 1772 he had saved enough to make the longed-for pilgrimage. He sent his wife a hundred pounds and set off for the South, leaving a letter to his father about his son's education, the spelling of which shows how little thought had been given to his own. "Take care of Molly and John," he writes, "and keep him at a good school and desire him to endeavour to retain the butys and knowledge the lattan authors are filled with." This love of the classic authors, whose works he can only have known from translations, runs through the whole of Romney's life, and connects him with Flaxman and the beginning of the nineteenth



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century, rather than with his immediate contemporaries. "We saw many may-poles erected in the streets," he writes from Nice, as he journeyed towards Rome in the May weather, "and in the evening rings of women, hand in hand, dancing round them, singing beautiful airs. . . . They moved with the greatest vivacity and spirit. The air of antiquity it carried along with it had the most enchanting effect. I thought myself removed two thousand years and a spectator of scenes in Arcadia." Romney may have remembered this evening at Nice when, later in life, he painted the lovely group of Lord Stafford's daughters, circling in a classic dance to the sound of a tambourine.

Unlike Sir Joshua, Romney made no use of the many social opportunities in Rome. He spent his time sketching the Roman peasant-models, copying Raphael's pictures, and making drawings after Michelangelo. But, best of all, he drank in the large, bright atmosphere of Rome itself, and he left it with immense regret. He was at first "benumbed," he wrote, "but next day my affections began to revive, and something hung about my heart that felt like sorrow." He climbed Mount Viterbo for a last glimpse of Rome, and "looked with an eager eye to discover that divine place. It was enveloped in a bright vapour. . . . My mind visited every place, and thought of everything that had given it pleasure, and I continued some time in



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that state, with a thousand tender sensations playing about my heart, till I was almost lost in sorrow." Nothing in all Sir Joshua's Italian notes speaks so straight from the heart as those few sentences.

Two years later, Romney was back in London again, where he boldly took a fine house, 32, Cavendish Square, pulled down only a few years ago. His courage was rewarded, for a powerful patron soon visited his studio, the Duke of Richmond, President of the Society of Arts, who commissioned him to paint his portrait. This was the beginning of Romney's success, and during the next twenty years a ceaseless stream of fashionable folk stopped their coaches at his door. We are not told Sir Joshua's opinion of his rival ; Romney, on the other hand, though he sincerely admired the President's work, refused to exhibit at the Royal Academy. This accounts for the little stir his beautiful pictures appear to have made, as they quietly left his studio year after year, bound straight for the country-houses they had been ordered to adorn. They were not like Reynolds', engraved almost as soon as they were painted. One of them, "Serena," an illustration of a poem by Hayley, was popular as an engraving, and you may see her, a girl in a white cap, bending over her book, intent on reading to the last flicker of her one candle. In the National Gallery is his "Parson's Daughter," a

## ROMNEY

pretty, girlish creature, wearing a green ribbon in her lightly powdered hair, and a white kerchief tucked into her brown dress.

There, too, you will see his "Lady Hamilton as a Bacchante," with dishevelled hair and captivating head, tilted over her right shoulder. Lady Hamilton, his "Divine Emma," as he called her, was his favourite sitter. He has left thirty finished portraits of her, besides numberless sketches. She was an ideal model, for not only was she a very beautiful young woman, but she had been a professional dancer, and was accustomed to study classical poses. This made her invaluable to Romney, who has painted her in every conceivable attitude, as Circe, Cassandra, and Calypso, as "The Spinstress," where Emma sits, her lovely head wrapped round hood-fashion, busy at her spinning-wheel; as a Magdalen, a Saint, and a Nun. The last picture he ever painted of her has been recently exhibited in London. It represents her as she looked on her wedding morning, just returned from her marriage-service in Marylebone Church. She wears a blue velvet hat with a high feather, and in the distance Vesuvius flames, to remind us that her husband, Sir William Hamilton, was Ambassador to the Court at Naples. When she left England, Romney felt her departure keenly, but he continued working, painting Lady Hamilton from memory as Ariadne, and many sitters, from Archbishops to actresses. He

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painted Miss Vernon, too, as "The Sempstress," sewing quietly in her shady hat under a tree in her garden. But his health was failing, and his natural gloominess increased. He sold his old house in Cavendish Square, and prepared plans for a gorgeous new one to be built somewhere in the Edgware Road, then a pretty country neighbourhood. His son persuaded him to content himself with a house at Hampstead, but his illness and restlessness increased so fast that he turned his back on his pictures and his ambitions, and went home to the north, to his wife and his old associations. There he was carefully tended, and, two years later, in 1802, died at Kendal in the Lake country.

Romney is an artist's painter; the trained eye best appreciates his pictures, their always excellent design, their sound drawing and pleasant colour. He had a real passion for beauty, and even in his unfinished sketches the way his heads are rapidly drawn in on the canvas gives a sense of great satisfaction. He was not strongly intellectual like Reynolds, nor has he Gainsborough's mastery of colour, but he fills a very definite place in our roll of eighteenth-century artists, and we could ill afford to spare him.

## CHAPTER VI

RICHARD WILSON (1714-1782).

WHEN the Royal Academy was founded there stood on the roll of its members the names of three men, each of them in his own way pre-eminent. The first was Reynolds, the President, a portrait-painter ; the second was Gainsborough, who painted portraits for his living and landscapes for his pleasure ; the third was Richard Wilson, their senior by some ten years, whose name will live by his landscapes.

Landscape-painting was little practised in the early days of the eighteenth century. Hogarth used it only as a background to certain pictures—for example, in the open-air scene of his “ Election ” series. Portrait-painting was the fashionable art, and Horace Walpole wrote with regret : “ In a country so profusely beautiful with the amenities of Nature as ours, it is extraordinary that we have produced so few good painters of landscape.” Probably the taste for landscape was of slow growth, for, in the general lack of patrons, Wilson’s life was a long struggle with poverty, and only

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Peter Pindar, the squib-writing doctor, had the good taste to prophesy smooth things to him—

“ But, honest Wilson, never mind ;  
Immortal praises thou shalt find ”—

warning him, however, that he would have to wait a hundred years for his recompense, a singularly apt prophecy !

Wilson was the son of a clergyman in Wales, and was educated by his father. A rich kinsman brought him to London, where he began his career by painting portraits. These were of no special importance, though one, the youthful Prince of Wales, afterwards George III., with his brother, the Duke of York, and their tutor, is now in the National Portrait Gallery, and several more are in the Garrick Club. He saved enough to take him to Italy, but not till he was in his thirty-sixth year. There he stayed for six years, painting and giving lessons. He made friends among the foreign artists living in Rome, and the travelling Englishmen. His best friend was the Italian, Zuccarelli, whose landscapes were greatly admired in England. He urged Wilson to take up landscape-painting, but the taste of the times was not cultivated enough to care for Wilson's serious and beautiful work. Zuccarelli, on the other hand, who had begun life as a scene-painter for the Opera, sold picture after picture, for his pretty, insipid style was easily



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understood, and Frederick, the foolish Prince of Wales, had set the fashion by buying steadily from him. Wilson, scorned by the world of buyers, would have starved in England had he not late in life obtained the post of librarian to the Royal Academy, with a small salary.

Wilson lived at first, while he still had hopes of being a successful artist, in a large house in Covent Garden ; but as time went on and he grew poorer, he moved about from one mean lodging to another. He once lived in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, because in those days there was still a beautiful view from his windows, northwards to the heights of Highgate and Hampstead. Quite at the end of his life he inherited from a brother a small estate in Wales, and retired to Llanberis to end his days in modest comfort.

All his life, undisturbed by want of recognition, Wilson was upheld by the certainty that his work would live ; and his proud hopes have been fulfilled. He ranks among the greatest of English landscape-painters. He drew his chief inspiration from the pictures of Claude and Poussin, those two Frenchmen, who, living in Rome in the latter half of the seventeenth century, both painted, unwearyingly, its clear skies and ancient buildings, either as landscapes simply, or as important backgrounds to pictures illustrating sacred or classical stories. From them Wilson learnt a love of broad spaces, rich,



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quiet colouring, and detail carefully subordinated. People object that his preoccupation with Roman scenery made him paint his native Wales as if it were the Campagna. But if you look at the illustration from his picture, "On the Wye," you will see how really English is the stormy evening sky, under which the mountains and river-banks turn golden in the sun's parting rays. There are many other pictures by him in the National Gallery, but this evening scene is perhaps the best. The sharp contrasts of light and shade are pleasant to the eye, and the pure bright blue of the river in the sunlight, by many shades brighter than the grey-blue of the sky, shines like a jewel in a casket of green and gold.

"The Ruins of the Villa of Mæcenas at Tivoli" was painted in 1754, during Wilson's Roman period. He had gone out to spend the day and dine under the trees at Tivoli with four English noblemen, one of whom, the Earl of Thanet, bought the picture, which passed later into the collection of Wordsworth's friend, Sir George Beaumont, who gave it to the nation. It is a fine composition, marked by the tall cypresses with their distaff-like summits, and the white villa, which gives its name to the picture, gleaming high in the distance.

The "Destruction of Niobe's Children" was a favourite subject with Wilson, repeated, they say, no less than five times. These pictures show a rocky



ON THE FIVE WAVE.

*A. H. M. Turner, painted in 1841, and now in the National Gallery, London.*



## RICHARD WILSON

landscape, fit background for the tragic story of the proud mother, Niobe, Queen of Thebes, who, boasting of her twelve children in the presence of Latona, mother only of two, was forced to see them all struck dead by the arrows of the twin deities, Apollo and Artemis. Niobe herself was changed into a stone on the mountain-side, which dripped every summer with watery tears.

Another charming landscape, also in the National Gallery, is his "River Scene." The river is spanned by a many-arched bridge, and in the foreground is a large, ancient sarcophagus rich in carven figures. It is an autumn scene, full of mellow peacefulness.

Two new Wilsons have lately been left to the nation by Mr. Salting; one an Italian coast scene, white surf beating on the shore, and a ruined castle, perhaps an ancient fort, on an island near by. The other is a lake scene with ruins, perched this time on a rock high above the water; below, a man fishing on the bank of the lake, a girl seated beside him in the placid afternoon light.

Wilson may perhaps be compared to Keats, the young English poet, who loved classical literature so well that, though he could only read its beauties in translations, the poetry of it entered into his soul and coloured all his lovely poems. So Wilson, born under the faint blue of an English sky, loved all his life the warmth and glow and dignity of Italy, and infused his pictures with the glory of his own imaginings.

## CHAPTER VII

### MORLAND (1763-1804).

GEORGE MORLAND, the animal-painter, is said to have written his own epitaph, and the tragedy of his short life is summed up in the five words of that epitaph, "Here lies a drunken dog." He came of a family of painters, for his grandfather and his father both earned their living by painting, and his mother, a Frenchwoman by birth, exhibited her work at the Royal Academy. His father set the boy early to copy Hobbema and other Dutch masters; and he was the first since the great Dutchmen of the seventeenth century to paint exclusively the outdoor life of the country-side, its fields and lanes, its farmyards and alehouses, all with a genius that seemed to burn none the less brightly for the disorder of his own life. In choosing such subjects, Morland followed no traditions of English art. Hogarth's work does not appear to have had any influence upon him; Richard Wilson, who died when Morland was nineteen, saw landscape through the glorified spectacles of the classic Italian artists; Gainsborough was alive, and his earlier landscapes and rustic scenes were certainly known to Morland, but as far as inner

## MORLAND

vision went, they moved in entirely different worlds, and only every now and then is any influence of the elder man's work to be seen on the younger.

The boy was apprenticed to his father, and worked with him for several years. The old man was harsh and severe to his son, training him well, but preventing him from enjoying any of the natural pleasures of his age. This unkindness had a bad effect on Morland's character, for when he once found himself free from his apprenticeship, he refused to enter Romney's studio as an assistant with a good salary, saying he had never known freedom in his life before, and he meant to have it now.

But, far from enjoying freedom, he became the slave of the picture-dealer in whose house he lodged, squandering money on his low pursuits, and toiling hard between times to pay for these doubtful pleasures. He was a good-looking young fellow, who swaggered through life, dressed as a rule in a green coat with large yellow buttons, top-boots and leather breeches. His marriage, when he was twenty-three, seemed for a time to steady him, for he chose well, and Miss Nancy Ward, the sister of the engraver, his friend, made him a devoted wife. Not, poor soul, that she could always live with him: sometimes he left her for weeks together to join his boon companions, the gipsies, travelling thus about the country to escape his creditors. But he always went back to her, and she would say, that, bad as he



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was, if he died, she would not outlive him three days, which in course of time really happened. Morland was frequently imprisoned for debt, as people used to be in those days, and it was in such a "sponging-house," as it was called, that he died, at the age of forty-one, and his wife dying according to her prophecy a few days after, they were buried together in a little burial-ground then existing in the Hampstead Road.

In the National Gallery we have one of Morland's best works, which you may study from our illustration. This "Inside of a Stable" is a beautiful picture; the design is excellent, and the horses—two great cart-horses and a little sturdy Welsh pony—are masterly in treatment. The boy leading the big grey horse, a sprig of oak in his coat, is charmingly placed. The summer trees wave outside the open door, and the light lies warmly on the golden straw and heaped-up mangers. Equally fine is another picture in the Victoria and Albert Museum, "Horses in a Stable." The great beauty in the painting here lies in the sorrel horse with the ash-grey reflections on his ribs and his silver-grey mane and tail. In the same place is an early picture, "The Valentine"; a pretty young woman sitting at her cottage-door in the sunshine is holding up a pale blue ribbon to an old woman with wrinkled hands. There are no animals in this picture, only two white hens at the girl's feet; the girl herself is treated in a way that



WHITE HORSE IN STABLE  
 (Turner, 1801)



## MORLAND

suggests a knowledge of Watteau's pictures. Morland had been once in France before his marriage, so he may have seen them in the Louvre; perhaps it was his mother's French blood in him that gives this occasional French grace to his work. Other pictures in which Morland shows his skill in treating women are Sir Charles Tennant's "Industry" and "Idleness." The industrious lady in a white dress, dark blue coat, and great broad-brimmed hat, sits in her grey-walled room at her polished table on which is set out her workbox of white wood. The idle lady is a study in white and grey. She wears white, and a mob-cap trimmed with a pale pink ribbon; her cloak lined with silver-grey hangs over her chair.

In the same collection are two more pictures, which have often been engraved, "Boys robbing an Orchard," and "Boys playing at Soldiers." The young thieves have been caught by the farmer; the apple-trees are gnarled and old, their ripe fruit and thick foliage are beautifully painted; the boys themselves are not village youngsters, but slender lads in the picturesque clothes of the period, knee-breeches, soft white shirts, and striped waistcoats. One clambers in alarm from the tree whose branches he has been shaking; the others pick up their coats and waistcoats and stolen fruit with guilty haste; you see how charmingly their swift motion is rendered. There is less of this quality in the second picture; the playing children are posed

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at their game, which they are carrying out with pretty seriousness under the old oak-tree, beneath the summer blue of the sky, crossed with white clouds. One little girl is the drummer, a little boy is the officer with his sword, three carry sticks as rifles, one has a little gun. The biggest boy in a paper helmet has a flag. The war with America was not long over when Morland painted these children, and they must have heard plenty of talk of battles and fighting, and seen preparations for war too, and the drilling of the recruits. The nurse-maid holds her baby up to enjoy the show, and the smallest girl, too young to be a soldier, is nursing her doll in imitation of her nurse. You may perhaps see these pictures some day, for the Tennant Gallery is open at certain times, and is very rich in English pictures.

Morland has painted another picture connected more tragically with the wars; it is called, "The Deserter's Farewell." A poor fellow has run away from his regiment, and gone back to his wife and cottage-home. He has been tracked down by the soldiers, who stand, in their three-cornered hats and red coats, waiting to tear him from his wife's passionate embrace. But in the end, far surpassing these "story-pictures," it is by his painting of horses and pigs that Morland will be remembered. Nobody before him ever painted the "spirit" of a horse or a pig, and this he has done supremely well,

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so that his very name conjures up before us a farm-yard and littered straw, with sunshine falling on the strong backs of cart-horses, going out to, or coming back from, their labours ; on cows, standing idly about ; on stout mother-pigs and active baby-pigs ; on flocks of ducks huddled together in some moist spot of the yard. Whether you know his paintings or not, you are certain to see engravings of them, for they were popular from the first, and are still reproduced, to the enjoyment of all who love homely scenes of English life, freshly painted and represented with a charming kind of natural elegance.

I have led you now through so many ages of painters, and have told you of so many varying styles of painting, that I will not detain you longer. In the end, you must, each one of you, study pictures for yourselves, and enjoy their beauties by the light of your own personal prejudices. Only, as with all other good gifts, the love of pictures must be trained, and you cannot learn too early that, before you can dance, you must acquire the habit of standing upright, and that those pictures which are, at first, the most easily understood will not always, in the long run, best repay your admiring love.

I will remind you too that, when a man makes a picture, he has to reconcile the facts of nature with the limitations of a given square of canvas. Paint-



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ing, therefore, must always be in bondage to certain conventions, and will differ according to the impression the artist has himself received, and to the manner in which he sets about handing it on to us.

Sometimes a whole convention will change, as when Paolo Uccello introduced the laws of perspective, and taught that, from one particular point of view, only a limited part of any object can be seen. You may yourselves see some equally astounding change, for the art of painting is bound up with the life of the human race, and is as capable of development as natural science itself ; but you will, I hope, never forget to love beauty and truth, and to train yourselves with all diligence to apprehend them.

Your reward will indeed be great, and it will come to you in innumerable forms, so widely do human capacities differ, as you know ; yet, to all of you who seek, one promise may safely be given, expressed in better words than any I can myself invent :

“ And there shall be for thee all soft delight,  
That shadowy thought can win ;  
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,  
To let the warm Love in !”

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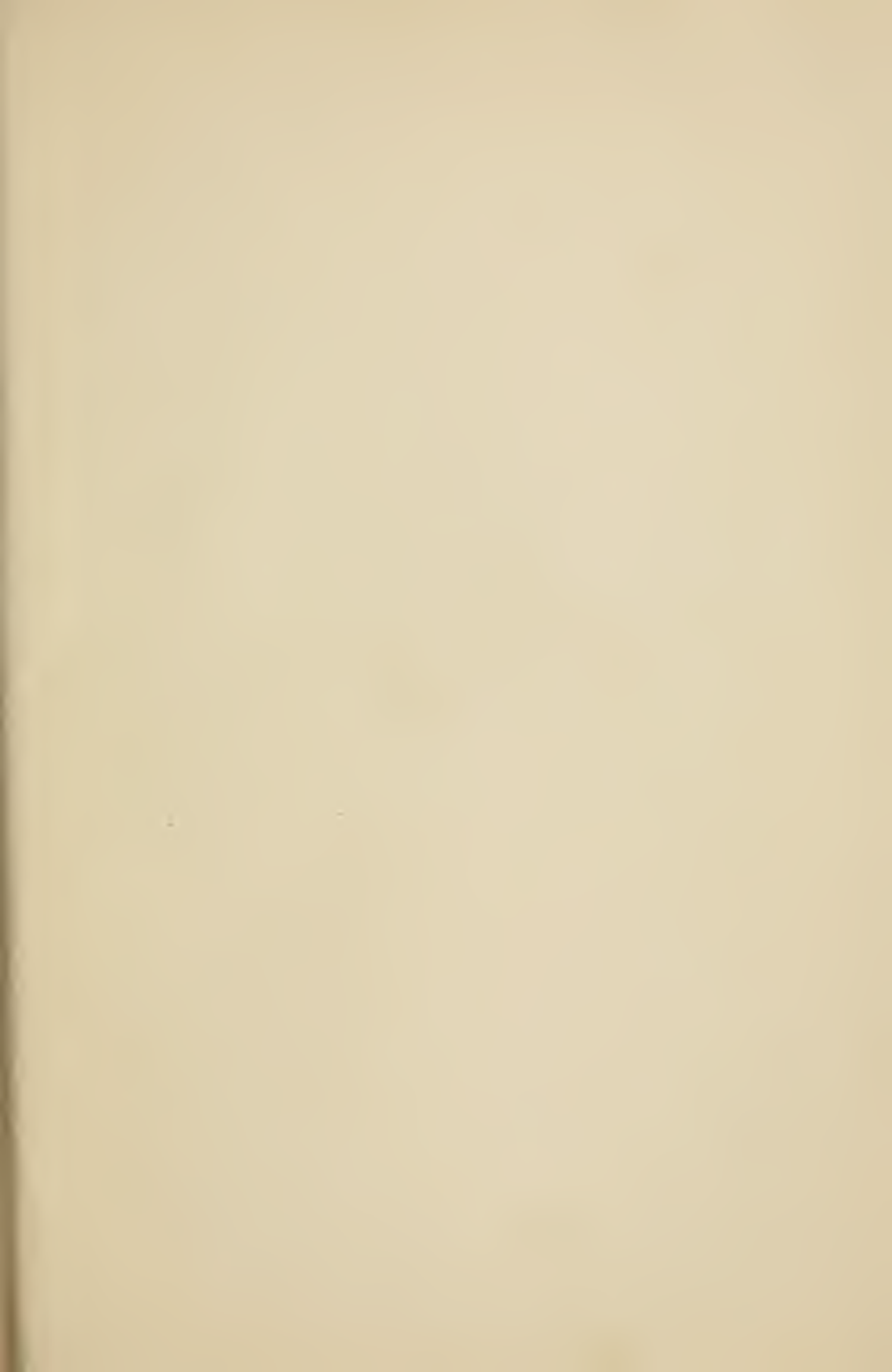
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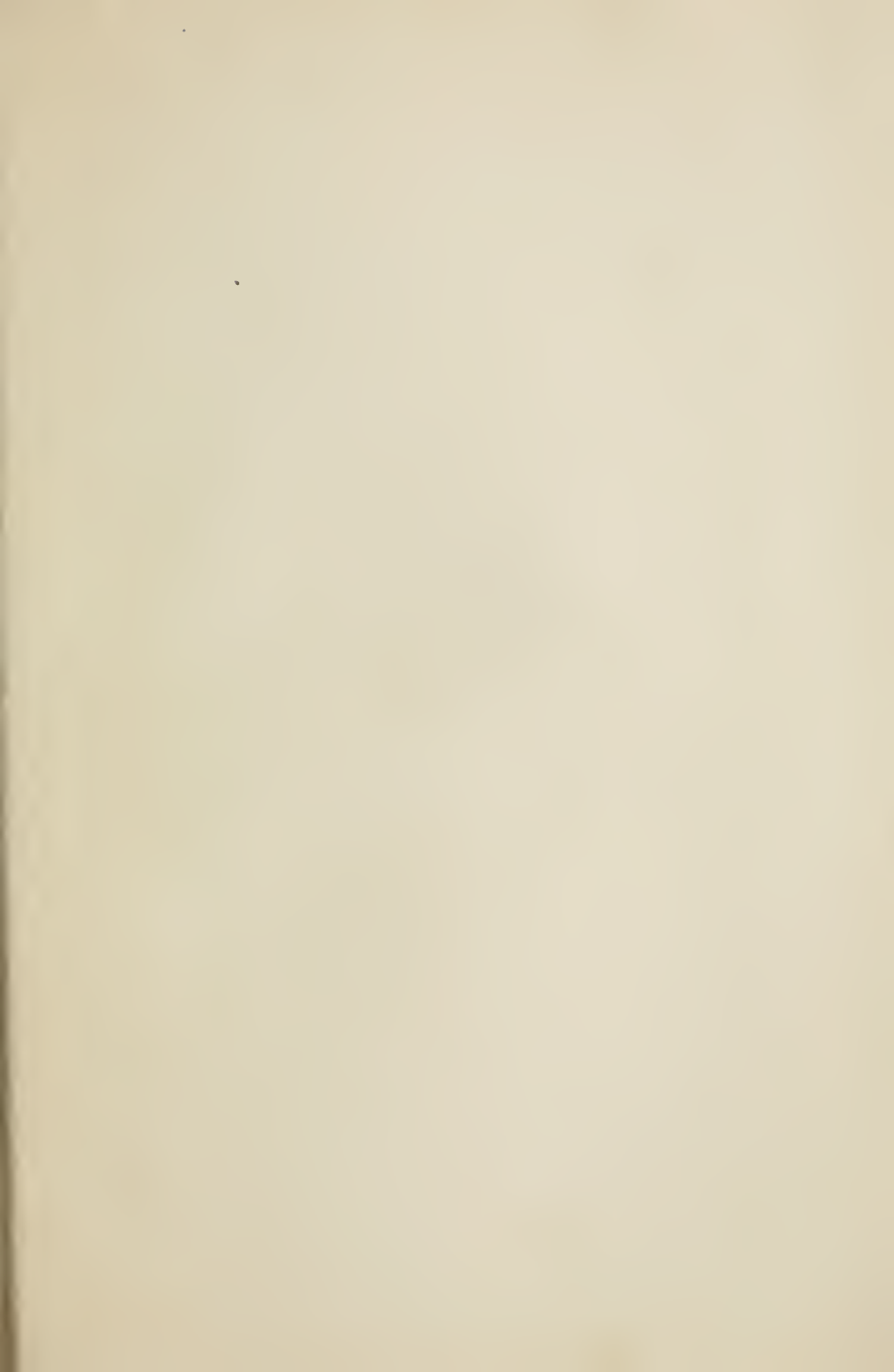
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